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Mr. Hudson Littell,
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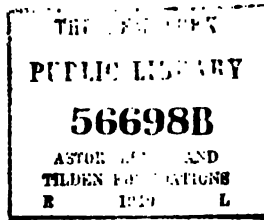
IDLE MAN.

VOL. I. no. 5

How various his employments, whom the world
Calls idle. *Cowper.*

NEW-YORK:
WILEY & HALSTED, No. 3, WALL-STREET.

1821-2.



Southern District of New-York, ss.

BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the eighteenth day of May, in the forty-fifth year of the independence of the United States of America, **WILEY & HALSTED**, of the said district, have deposited in this office the title of a book, the right whereof they claim as proprietors, in the words following, *to wit* :

The Idle Man.

How various his employments, whom the world
Calls idle. *Cowper.*

In conformity to the act of the congress of the United States, entitled, "An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned;" and also to an act, entitled, "An act, supplementary to an act, entitled, an act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned, and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching historical and other prints."

G. L. THOMPSON,
Clerk of the Southern District of New-York.

TO THE PUBLIC.

As this is a much larger number than any of the foregoing, it is put at a higher price, that I may receive something like a compensation for the labour. For the future, the cost of the several numbers will vary with their size. It is my wish and intention, however, to keep as much as possible within my old limits.

A story will sometimes run out to a greater length than was intended. This is the case with one begun for the Idle Man. I am desirous of making it a part of this work, but am in doubt, on account of its size, whether to publish it separately, or in connexion with the Idle Man. In whatever form it may be put out, its publication will be delayed for a short time.

The present number closes the first volume. From the favour shown me, I have concluded to begin a second. It is a pleasant thing to have our lonely labours helped on by the remembrance that they have met with kind encouragement, and the belief that they will meet with still more ; and I shall return to my work with a cheerfulness, which I knew nothing of when I set out.

THE AUTHOR.



THOMAS THORNTON.

—and prudent counsels fled ;
And bounteous Fancy, for his glowing mind,
Wrought various scenes, and all of glorious kind.
Crabbe.

—Remorse
—defeated pride,
Prosperity subverted, maddening want,
Friendship betrayed, affection unreturned,
Love with despair, or grief in agony.
Wordsworth.

Or to the restless sea and roaring wind,
Gave the strong yearnings of a ruin'd mind.
Crabbe.

“WHY, Mr. Thornton, are you dreaming?” said Mrs. Thornton, trying to appear easy, and dropping in her lap her work, which she had not set a stitch to for the last half hour.—“I can’t see to thread my needle, for the wick has run up, till it looks like a very cock’s comb, and the fire has got so low, that I hardly feel the end of my fingers. It’s exceedingly chilly about the room—pray give me my shawl, or I shall perish.”

“Do as other wise people do, my dear,—look back a little, and you’ll find your shawl on the bars of your chair. As to the candle, I’ll see to

that ; and if I could take the coxcomb from our Tom's head as easily, it would be equally well for your sight."

"Ha! ha! Now, Mr. Thornton, you shouldn't try to be witty when you're vexed. You don't know what bungling work angry folks make at humour."

"True, my dear,—much the same as fond ones at government."

Mr. Thornton took his feet down from the side of the fire-place, put his spectacles on his nose, at the same time looking sharply through them, with both his gray eyebrows thrown into double arches.

"Upon my word, Mr. Thornton, I'm glad you're at home again ; for you sat there playing your spectacles between your fingers, with nothing but a gruff hum, now and then, as if you were miles off in the woods, and contriving how to clear your wild lands."

"I've enough growing wild at my own door to see to, without taking to the woods, and harder to bring into order, than any soil my trees grow upon, however stubborn."

Mrs. Thornton saw that she could not rid herself of the difficulty by laughing. She

coloured and remained silent. She was conscious of being too indulgent to her son ; and might, perhaps, have been brought to a wiser course towards him, had not her husband's impatience of her weakness, and vehement opposition to her folly, and a consequent harshness in his bearing towards Tom, created a kind of party feeling within her, which, with a common sort of sophistry, she resolved wholly into pity for her child. This was a bad situation for the boy, for the weakness of his mother's conduct was easily perceived by him, and looked upon with a little of contempt, at the same time that it made for his convenience ; while his father's sternness, which kept him in check, and which he would gladly have been rid of, commanded his respect. This led him to like what was agreeable, rather than what was right, and to lose all distinction of principle in self-gratification. And though all selfishness hardens the heart, there is nothing which turns it so soon to stone, as a contempt for those who love us, and are fondly, though unwisely, contributing to our pleasures. To hate our enemies is not so bad as to despise our friends. The cold, hard triumph of prosperity is a worse sin than that

which eats into us in the rancour of adversity ; and it is more deceptive too ; for good fortune has something joyous in it, even to the morose, who oftentimes mistake their gladness for a general good will, and play with the miseries of some, to make others laugh.

Even vehement and inconsiderate tempers, who take fire as quick in another's cause as in their own, lose their generosity, where too much is ministered to their will ; and what was only a warm resentment of another's wrong, may come to be nothing else, but a feeling of power and a love of victory.

Mr. Thornton saw the confused expression in his wife's face, and his sharp, sudden look relaxed into one of mild and melancholy reproach, while she sat pricking her finger, as she tried to seem to be intently hurrying on her work. He pulled out his watch, and continued looking at it some time, taking an uneasy kind of delight in seeing the minute hand go forward, and wishing it later.

"It is not very late, I hope, Mr. Thornton."

"O, no,—but a little past twelve—a very reasonable hour for a boy to be out—and at a cockfight, too."

“But, Mr. Thornton, had you heard how earnestly he importuned me, you would not wonder I gave him leave. He promised to return early. But boys, you know, never think of time when about their amusements.”

“It is not of much consequence that they should, when their amusements are so humane and innocent. A cockpit must be an excellent school for a lad of Tom’s mild disposition.”

Some couples have particular points of union, but more have those of disagreement; and from the frequency with which both return to their several kinds, it would be hard to tell which afford the most pleasure.

There was but one subject on which Mr. and Mrs. Thornton were at odds with each other, but to make up for the want of more, it was one of very frequent occurrence; and had not Tom suddenly made his appearance, there is no knowing how far the bitter taunting of the old gentleman would have gone at this time.

Tom entered the room, his crisped, black hair off his forehead, his swarthy complexion flushed with excitement from the desperate conflict he had just witnessed; his mouth firmly set, his nostrils expanded, and his eye fiery and

dilated. He had a strong cast of features, the muscles of his face always working, and his movements hasty, impetuous, and threatening. His countenance was open and manly, and it seemed to depend upon the turn of circumstances whether he was to make a good, or a bad man. He was surprised, and a little abashed for a moment, at finding his father up. He looked at his mother, as if to say she had betrayed him ; and his mother looked at him, as if to upbraid him for breaking his word by staying so late, and thus bringing his father's displeasure upon both.

“ I suppose that I may go to bed now, as you have seen fit to return home at last, my young gentleman ? And did you bet on the winning cock, or are you to draw on me to pay off your debt of honour ? ”

“ I betted no higher than I had money to pay ; ” answered Tom, proudly : “ and I care not if I go with an empty pocket for a month to come,” (his face brightening) “ for he was a right gallant fellow I lost upon.”

Angry as his father was, the careless generosity of Tom's manner touched his pride.—“ You are malapert. But this comes of late

hours, and dissipation. We'll have no more of it. Get you to bed, Sir ; and look to it that you do not gaff the old rooster,—I'll have no blood spilt on my grounds."

"Never without your leave, Sir," said Tom, in a humble tone, his mouth drawing into a smile at his father's ignorance. And glad to be let off so easily, he went to bed, laughing at the thoughts of their old dunghill, blind of one eye, dying game. "They must have been but simple lads in my father's day," said Tom to himself, as he blew out his candle, and threw himself into bed to dream over the fight.

"Tom is not so bad a boy, neither," said Mr. Thornton, putting the fender before the fire, and preparing to go to bed. "And I see not why he shouldn't make a proper man enough, were there no one to take all the pains in the world to spoil him."

In a few minutes all was quiet in the house.

Tom had now reached that age, in which it is pretty well determined whether the passions are to be our masters or servants. He had never thought for a moment of checking his ; and if they were less violent at one time than another, it was because he was swayed for the

instant by some gentler impulse, and not that he was restrained by principle. His father's late mild treatment of him seemed to have a softening effect upon his disposition, and for a few days he appeared perfectly at rest and free from starts of passion. But some little incidents soon brought back his father's severity of manner, and this the son's spirit of opposition; and the mother's weakness was a constant temptation to his love of power. Every day occasioned a fresh difficulty. Tom decided all the disputes in the school, it mattered little with him whether by force or persuasion. And as he feared no one living, and generally sided with the weakest, partly from a love of displaying his daring and prowess, and partly from a hatred of all tyranny but his own, he frequently came home with his clothes torn and face bloody and bruised. This, however, might be said for Tom, he was always the favourite of the smaller boys. He cared not to oppress, where it showed neither courage nor skill. His poor mother was filled with constant trembling and alarm for him. This was an amusement to him; and, from the most violent rage after one of these contests, he often broke out into a loud laugh at

the plaintive sound of his mother's lament over him. Amongst Tom's other accomplishments, he was a great *whip*. So without saying a word to any one, he contrived, with the assistance of a schoolfellow as wild as himself, to put a young, fiery horse, which his father had just purchased, to a new gig. The horse was restiff—Tom grew angry and beat him—his companion was thrown out, and broke his arm; but Tom, with the usual success of the active and daring, cleared himself unhurt. The carriage, however, was dashed to pieces, and his father's fine horse ruined.

Not long after this, and before his father's anger had time to cool, Tom, with some of his play-mates, was concerned in breaking the windows of a miserly neighbour, that they might make him loosen his purse strings for once. One of the smallest boys was detected, and upon refusing to give information of the rest, the master began flogging him severely. Tom would have taken the whipping himself, but he knew this would not save the lad, unless he made the others known; besides, he had an utter detestation of mean and cowardly acts, and could not brook that the little fellow should be punished for not turning traitor. Tom sprung

upon his seat, and crying out, "a rescue!" was followed by the other boys, and in an instant the master was brought to the floor. Lying upon one's back is not a favourable posture for dignity—certainly not in a schoolmaster. Though a good deal intimidated, the master frowned and threatened; but Tom was not to be frightened at words and looks. Indeed the ludicrous situation of his instructor, the novelty of it, and his mock authority, put Tom into such a fit of laughter, that he could hardly give his conditions of release. There was nothing but shouting and uproar through the school. And it was not till a promise of full pardon to all concerned, that the master was allowed to rise.

Tom knew that this would end his school-boy days, and so far, he was not sorry for what had happened; for he longed to be free and abroad amidst the adventures of the world. "Let it all go," said he, walking forward with a full swing; "if I have been wild and headstrong, I have not wasted my time. And I'll so better my instruction, that I will one day be amongst men, what I have been amongst boys. And who will then dare say, nay, to Tom Thornton?"

As he came in sight of the house, he slackened his pace; and forgetting his distant views of power, began to consider how he should meet his father.

“It will be all out in less than four and twenty hours. I had better then have the merit of telling it myself. This will go some ways towards my pardon; for the old man, with all his severity, likes openness,—it has saved me many a whipping, when I was younger. So, thou almost only virtue I possess, let me make the most of thee while thou stick-est by me.”

He was, indeed, a forthright lad, not because he considered openness a virtue, but because it agreed with the vehemence and daring of his character, and gratified his pride.

With all his self reliance, his heart beat quick as he drew near the door. He thought of his father's strict notions of government, his own numerous offences of late, the sternness and quickness of his father's temper, and the violence and obstinacy of his own; and he could not but dread the consequences of the meeting.

“Why should I stand like a coward, arguing the matter with myself, when I know well

enough that there is but one way of acting? The sooner begun, the sooner over, and the worst has an end."

So saying, he threw open the door, and went directly to his father's room. Mr. Thornton was not there. He passed hastily from one room to another, as in pursuit of some one who was trying to escape him, and inquiring quickly of every body he met, for his father. He at last went to his mother's chamber, and knocking, but scarcely waiting for an answer, entered it and asked abruptly, "where is he?"

"Who, my dear?"

"Dear me no dears, I'm not in a humour for it. Where's my father?"

"Your father, child! He's gone to the village. But what's the matter? Something dreadful, I'm sure. O, Thomas, you make my life miserable."

"Humph!" said Tom, after a pause, and drawing his lips close together. "Gone to the village! Then every old woman in it has blabbed it over and over again in his ears long ago, and with a thousand lies tacked to it, and as many condolences about his hotheaded son; and nothing puts my father into such a fury as

the whining of these old crones. Ah, I see the jig's up, and all my honesty comes to nothing. Well, it can't be helped,—I see it coming.”

“What can't be helped? Why don't you speak to me, Thomas, and tell me what's the matter?”

“Ah! mother, is it you?—I was thinking about.—What's the matter, ask you? Matter enough, truly. There's young Star sold for a lame cart-horse—a gallant fiery steed you were too, poor Star—the gay furbished gig, dashed into as many fragments as your chandelier, and gone with Pharaoh's chariot wheels, for aught I know. Mother, I've been in too great a hurry ever since, to ask your pardon for running foul your chandelier yesterday. But father came in so close upon me, he liked to have cut his foot with the pieces. There's another mark to my list of sins. Then there's the breaking of Jack's head for not minding me instead of my father, and a score more of worse things, and all within these six days.”

“O, Thomas, Thomas, what will become of us?”

“Become of *us*? Why, 'tis none of your doings, Mother. You never broke the gig, or

lamed Star, or cudgeled Jack, that I know of. But stop your grief awhile, for the worst is behind."

"Worse, Thomas! I shall lose my senses. Your father mutters about you in his very sleep; and he has threatened of late to send you out of the house, if you go on at such a rate."

"I know it. Yet I hardly think he would turn me adrift. What if he does? There is room enough; and come fair or foul, I've a ready hand and a stout heart."

"You will certainly kill your unhappy mother if you talk so. Your father says your conduct is all owing to my indulgence, and you have no gratitude or pity for me."

"In faith, Mother, I fear father has the right on't. Come, come, don't make yourself miserable about such an overgrown boy as I am, and I'll tell the rest of my story.

"Mother, I'm a rebel and an outlaw, and the worst of it is, my father's notions of government are as high as the Grand Turk's. Yes, we had old pedagogue flat on his back; and he could no more turn over than a turtle. And when we let him up, he trembled, every joint of him,

knees and elbows, with his fingers hanging straight down like dipped candles.”

Here Tom fell a laughing, and his mother burst into tears. Though her weak fondness for him took away nearly all respect for his mother, still Tom loved her, and often blamed himself severely, that he had given her so much trouble, and so often brought upon her his father’s displeasure. His heart was touched; and taking her hand, he asked forgiveness for trifling with her feelings. “Do not think that it is because I am careless of what concerns you. You see I play the fool with my own troubles, and I certainly am not indifferent about them.”

“I know it, my son. But you will meet with nothing except evil in life, if you do not learn prudence and self-control. You have a good heart, I believe; yet you are giving constant pain and anxiety to your best friends, and must, so long as your passions are your masters, and you, violent and changing as the sea.”

Her son promised to set seriously about subduing his passions, and letting his reason have more sway.

As Tom conjectured, Mr. Thornton heard the whole story, and with the usual country village colouring. It was too much for his irascible temper, goaded as it had been of late by his son's inconsiderate conduct. He set off home in great wrath, hurrying over Tom's misdeeds so rapidly and disorderly, that a dozen multiplied and changed places with such swiftness, they showed like a thousand. With his mind thus filled with blind rage, and his body fevered with the speed with which he walked, he entered the house, a very unfit subject for Tom to begin the exercise of his new resolutions upon.

Tom had seen his father coming along the road, and had gone to his room waiting his arrival with a determination to relate the whole affair, confess his error in this and other instances, make known his resolution to change his conduct, and humbly ask forgiveness for the past, and all in a dutiful and composed manner.

Mr. Thornton seized the latch, but with a hand so shaking with rage, that it did not rise at his touch. Heated and impatient as he was, the least thing was enough to make him furious;

he thrust his foot against the door,—it started the catch, and sent it half across the room. The passing sense of shame at his uncontrolled passion only increased his anger; and seeing his son standing in the middle of the room,—“Blockhead,” he cried, darting forward, and with his face almost touching Tom’s, and his clenched fists prest convulsively against his thighs,—“blockhead, dare you fasten me out of my own room?”

The unexpected violence of Mr. Thornton’s manner rather surprised than irritated Tom, and he looked at his father with a composed and slightly contemptuous cast of expression, without making any reply.

Mr. Thornton was sensible how groundless his charge was, the instant he uttered it. He was for a moment discomposed, too, by his son’s calm and haughty bearing; and probably would have been glad, had Tom answered as he sometimes did.

“Do you stand there to insult me, Sir? You may well hold your peace, for what could you say to your infamous and rebellious conduct?”

“Do you mean fastening your door, Sir?” asked Tom with a sneer.

"Door, door, puppy! Look ye, their hinges shall rust off first, e'er you shall open them again, unless you mend your life."

"Say but the word, Sir, and *you* need not be at the trouble of fastening."

"You'r a cold blooded, thankless wretch," stormed out his father. "You were born to be a curse instead of a blessing to me, and you joy in it. You lead a life of violence and riot, and will live and die a disgrace to your family."

"I'll do something to give it a name," said Tom, "if I hang for it. I'll not lead a milk-sop life of it, to be called respectable by old dames, young sycophants, and money lenders."

"A name, indeed! You'll go marked like Cain, and with your hand, too, against every man, and every man's hand against you, and hang you will, unless you mend."

"Better that, than without a name. And be a halter my destiny," said he, looking down upon his manly figure with some complacency; "I shall become a cart as well as another man."

"Fop!" snapped out his father, enraged at Tom's contemptuous, cool trifling.

"I'm no fop. If I'm a handsome fellow, I thank God for it; and where's the harm of that?"

"Do you repeat my words, Sir, and blaspheme in my presence, and set all laws, divine and human, at defiance? Is't not enough to break and destroy what's mine, and keep all at home in an uproar, but you must go abroad to disgrace me, and make yourself the hate and dread of every body, by your violence and rebellion? But you shall be humbled, and that in the eyes of all the world. We'll have that proud spirit of yours down, before it rides over any more necks. Yes, my lad, it is all settled.—The whole school, with you at their head, (for you shall be their leader in this, as you have been in every thing else) shall tomorrow morning down on their knees before their master, and ask his pardon."

"I on my knees to that shadow of a man! No, in faith, I'd stand as straight and stiff before him as a drill sergeant, till my legs failed, e'er I'd nod my head to him. What! he that would whip all faith and honour out of a boy, till he left a soul in him no bigger than his

own! I'll bow to none but him that made me, so help—"

"Hold, hold, said the father; (whose passions were now at their utmost,) have a care before you take an oath on't; for, as I live, you're no longer son of mine, unless you do it."

"Then I'm my own master, and the ground I stand on is my own; for, by my right hand, I'll ask forgiveness of no man living," said Tom, turning resolutely away from his father, as if all was ended.

"Mad wretch," called out his father, "hear me now for the last time; for unless you this instant promise to obey, I'll never set eyes on you more,—and leave this house you shall by tomorrow's light."

"'Tis a bright night," said Tom, looking composedly out of the window, "and the stars will serve as well. I'll not eat nor sleep where I am not welcome," said he, taking up his hat and walking deliberately out of the room.

His determined manner at once satisfied Mr. Thornton that Tom would act up to what he had said; and a father's feelings for the moment took possession of him, with compunction for the violence which had driven his son from him.

He went towards the door to call Tom back, but he was already out of hearing.—“Wilful and headstrong boy,” said the old man, turning and shutting the door after him with a feeling of disappointment, “time and suffering alone can cure you.” Thus for the time he eased his conscience, and was saved the sacrifice of his pride.

Tom was passing through the entry with a hasty step, and had nearly reached the outer door, when the light caught his eye, as it shone from under the parlour door. The sight in an instant recalled him to himself, and stirred every home feeling within him. He heard his mother’s voice as she was reading aloud. The blood throbbed violently to his very throat. The thought that she should be so tranquil, and so unconscious of the affliction that was ready to break upon her, cut him to the heart. If she had been a human victim which he was about to sacrifice, he could not have felt more remorse. He listened a moment. “I must not go without seeing her, without taking her blessing with me,—else I shall go accurst!” He laid his hand upon the latch and raised it a little,—his mother still read on.

With all his violence and rudeness, Tom had a strong affection for his mother. His feelings were softened, and he was humbled and pained at reflecting upon the unjust violence of a father, who, though of a stern and hasty temper, he had heretofore respected. To a mind not wholly depraved, the faults of a parent are almost as mortifying and wounding as its own ; and Tom would have given the world, if the wrong had now been in himself alone. "I dare not trust myself to see my mother now. She would make a very child of me, my father would be sued too, and then what becomes of all my resolutions and decision !" "Pshaw," said he, dashing away a tear with one hand, as the other dropped from the latch, "is this the way for one like me to begin the world ?" He walked slowly out of the house, and drew the door to gently after him, and passed down the yard, unconscious that he was moving forward till he reached the gate. He opened it mechanically, then leaning over it, looked towards his home. "'Tis an ill parting with you, this," said he ; "yet I leave you not in anger. Many a blessing I have had, and many a happy time on't, and many more there might have been for me, had

I not been a froward child. There are few such to come, I fear." He stood with his eyes fixed on the house, while his mind wandered over the past, and what awaited him. The light flashed out cheerfully upon the trees near the window, and their leaves twinkled brightly in it. He cast his eyes round, but the earth looked gloomy in the darkness, for no lights were to be seen but those of the distant stars. "I said that ye would serve me," said he, looking upward, "and if I spoke in anger, Heaven forgive me for it. I must be on my way, and must go like a man."

In the midst of the most violent passions, it is curious to see how quickly and with what care the mind will sometimes lay its plans for future resources. Thomas Thornton, when much younger than at this time, had been made a pet, that he might be used as an instrument, by a lad a little older than himself, of the name of Isaac Beckford. Isaac plotted most of the mischief done at school, and applauded Tom for his sagacity and intrepidity in the execution, always taking care not to demand any praise for his own ingenious contrivances. They in this way became necessary to each other, and after

Isaac left school to reside in the city with his uncle, of the same name, and whose ward he was, he wrote frequently to Tom, urging him to come to town, and share in the amusements in which a large fortune would soon enable Isaac to indulge. Tom now resolved to make his way to the city and have the benefit of his friend's influence to put himself in a situation to be distinguished in the world.

Having made up his mind, though it was somewhat of a journey on foot to the city, and he wholly ignorant of the way, (the village in which he resided lying far off from any great road) Tom marched forward as confidently as if the church spires of the town had been in sight. The character of adventure, freedom and novelty in his condition, the sharp, clear night air, and the crowd and glitter of the stars in the sky, gave an expanse and vivid action to his mind, and roused up the hopeful spirit which for a time had slept within him. "Come, come," said he to himself, "you're a tall boy, Tom, better fitted to shoulder your way through the world, than delve Greek under a starvling pedant."

So intent was he upon his schemes, that he took little heed to the by-road he was travelling, and had walked till near midnight without being conscious of time or fatigue. The perfect stillness about him at last drew his attention, and looking round, he found himself on the top of a small hill in the midst of a country perfectly barren, broken into knolls, and covered, as far as the eye could reach, with large, loose stones. An old tree, at a distance, was all that showed life had ever been here ; and that with its sharp, scraggy, and barkless, gray branches shooting out uncouthly towards the sky, looked like a thing accurst.—“A hard and lonely life you must have had of it here,” said Tom, “and been sadly off for music, if you were at all particular about it ; for I doubt whether any sound has been heard for a long time in your branches, but that of the ravens and the heavy winds. It is as deadly still all around here, as the sky ; I wish I could say it looked as well.—What a pity that gibbets are out of fashion, for this would be a choice place for them ; and could I but hear the creaking of one, I should not have my ears so palsied with this dreadful, intense silence.—There winds a yellow cart-track from

hill to hill, as far as I can see—it's to the left, and omens ill. I'll take this that turns to the right—whether to the world's end or not, time will tell."

And forward he went. He at last grew weary; and as his pace slackened, he began to think of his home, his father and mother, and his many offences. His conscience was touched, and he felt as if undeserving the light of the quiet heavens that shone on him.—"Can one prosper," said he, "as he goes, when his father's anger and mother's grief follow him?"—His heart began to fail, and a thought passed him of trying to find his way back.—"What, and have my father taunt me, and call me a lad of metal? And how like a whipped dog I should look, crawling up the yard! And then that forked master, and his pardon!" cried Tom, clinching his fists till the nails nearly brought blood, and muttering a curse between his teeth, as the tears started to his eyes part in grief and part in unsated rage.—"Would that I had you in my grapple once more, you soulless wretch, and you should never make mischief between men again,—you mere thing!—What, return to all that! No, in faith, I'd sooner be thrown out here like a

dead beast, and lie till all the bones in this body were as bare and white as these stones, e'er I'd go back so."

He travelled on, not rapidly, but with a loose, irregular step. Sustaining and hopeful feelings had left him, and melancholy and self-accusing thoughts were passing in his soul; yet his mind was made up, and supported by a kind of dogged obstinacy.—"There will be no end to this track, as I see. It winds round and over these thousand hills, as if it were delighted at getting into so pleasant a country." He continued his rout.—"Must my voice lose itself forever in the solitude of this stillness? Is there a doom of eternal silence on all things, wherever I go? Will nothing speak to me?"—Presently he heard a low, rumbling sound, as in the earth under his feet. He started, but recovering himself, walked on. It increased to a surly growl, and seemed to spread underneath the hills and through the hollows; and the earth jarred.—"Does nature make experiments with her earthquakes in this out-of-the-way place, before she overturns cities with them?" said he, with a bitter scoff, feeling how little he cared at the moment for what might happen to him.

As he came round a hill, the sound opened distinctly upon him, sending up its roar into the air ; and raising his eyes, he saw at a distance a tall, giant pile, looking almost black against the sky.—“ So, my earthquake turns out to be nothing but a waterfall. And why can't I be fooled again, and be made to believe that clumsy factory, the huge castle of some big, hairy manslayer and violater of damsels? What, shall I be down-hearted now in my need—I who have carried a confident brow and a firm breast against whatever opposed me? It must be that I need food, else how could I be so melancholy? I'll have that and sleep too before long, and a fresh body and bright morning to start with tomorrow.”

So saying, he took his way toward the building. The path led him to the stream just above the fall. It lay still and glassy to the very edge of the precipice, down which it flung itself, roaring and foaming. The trees and bushes hung lightly over it, and the stars looked as thick in its depths, as in the sky above him. He was about resting himself upon a stone ; but turning, he saw it was a grave-stone.—“ It is a holy thing,” said he, “ and I will rest

myself elsewhere.”—He looked round,—there was not another grave in sight.—“What, all alone,” said he, “no companions in death? Though we hold not communion with each other in the grave, yet there is something awful in the thought of being laid in the ground away from the dwellings of all the living, and not even the dead by our side. But thou hast chosen thy habitation well, for this stream shall sing a holier and longer dirge by thee, than ever went up from man; yet this shall one day be still, and its waters dried up; but the spirit that was in thee shall live with God.”

He passed along the race-way. The water had left it, the grass was growing here and there in little clumps in its gravelly bottom, its planks and timbers forced up, forked out like a wreck, and the huge wheel, which had parted from its axle, lay broken and aslant the chasm. He looked towards the building. The moon, which was just rising behind it, and shining through its windows, made it appear like some monster with a thousand eyes. Its door-path had grown up, and nothing was heard but the wind passing through its empty length, and here and there the flapping of a window. He went round it, and saw

at a little distance, four or five long, low buildings standing without order, upon a rising ground, without fence or tree, or any thing near them but short, withered grass.—“One would have thought,” said Tom, “that nature had done enough without art’s coming in to help the desolation. Not a light hereabouts. This seems not much like either bed or supper.” He looked in at one house, then another, but nothing was to be seen except bare plastered walls. At last, from one of the houses he spied a light gleaming through a crevice. The sight warmed his heart. He went to the door, and knocked.

“Who’s there?” said one in a female voice.

“A friend.”

“More foes than friends abroad at this hour, belike,” replied the person within.

“I’ve lost my way,” said Tom. “No harm shall come to you, good woman, by letting in a traveller.”

“You promise well and in an honest voice,” said she, as she opened the door. The light shone upon her, and Tom saw before him a tall, masculine woman, with strong features, but with a serious and subdued cast of countenance.

“Who are you, young man? Out on no good intent, I fear, at this time o’night.”

“I’m Thornton of Thorntonville,” said Tom, with his usual readiness, “an you’ve ever heard of the place. I was going to the city afoot for once, and have missed my way.”

“Thornton of Thorntonville,” said the old woman, seeming to recollect herself, “I’ve seen your father, then, down at the big house yonder. Come in.”

“Your fire is comforting,” said Tom, sitting down by it, “and it is the first comfortable thing I’ve met with these long four hours past. But you have made an odd choice of situations, my good woman.”

“The poor have not often their choice,” said she. “And there are things sometimes which make the bare heath dearer to us than garden or park.”

“They are sad things then,” said Tom.

“Sad indeed,” said the old woman, looking into the fire. She sat silent a little time; then breathing forth a low sigh that seemed to relieve the bosom of its aching, she said to Tom, “you must be over weary, and hungry too, if you are from Thorntonville to-day, for ’tis a long walk :

and you must have come over the heath ; and one may stand there as at sea,—hill after hill, like thousands of waves, and not a living thing on one of them all, till they run into the very sky. Wide as it is, it would hardly find summer feed for my old Jenny, were it not for the circle of grass that trims round a gray stone here and there.”

“There is not much to be said for its appearance,” replied Tom. “I’m not a little tired, too ; and though I can’t well tell how far I’ve walked, there was not a streaked cloud in the sky when I left home.”

“It must have been a quick foot and a light heart that brought you so long a way in so short a time,” said she, as she was getting ready a bowl of bread and milk. “The young hurry on, as if life would ne’er run out ; yet many fall by the way ; and I’ve lived to lay those in the ground, whom I looked to have had one day put the sod on this gray head.”

Tom’s thoughts had gone home, but the old woman’s last words were sounding in his ears. “And who will do that last office for me, or for them ?” thought he. She saw the gloom over Tom’s face ; and believing she had caused it—

"never mind," she said, "the complainings of one whose troubles are nigh over. Here!" giving Tom the bowl,—“you have but one dish to supper, yet that good of its kind; for 'tis short feed that makes the richest milk.”

“Whose is that huge building to the left, that creaks like a tavern sign?” asked Tom.

“It was his who would have made money out of moonshine. But he has gone before his works.”

“And they did not bury him yonder to mock him, I trust?”

“O, no,” said the old woman, her lips trembling, and a flush crossing her face, “she that I laid there, had no schemes of grandeur; for Sally Wentworth was of a meek and simple heart.”

“Forgive me,” said Tom, “I should not have spoken of this, had I known how near it was to you.”

“You have no forgiveness to ask of me,” said the mother; “I’m a lone woman, and there seldom passes here one who cares to be troubled with my griefs; and it is moisture to this dried heart to talk to one who can feel for my afflictions; for Sally was not only my child, but

God has seldom blessed a mother with such a child. And when he took from me my husband, I hope I did not forget his goodness in what he left to me ; yet he saw fit to call her too, and his will be done. If grief had not killed her, I could bear my lot better. But how could it be else, when he that she loved was so cruelly taken from her ?”

“ She died of love then ?” said Tom. “ ’Tis a death seldom met with, and bespeaks a rare mind.”

“ I know it,” replied the mother. “ True love is a peculiar and a holy thing ; yet those are said to love, who can lay one in the ground, and look fondly on another. O, I have seen it, and it has made me shudder when I have thought of those in the grave. Yes, and many too would scoff at them that were true to the dead ; yet they would not, were it given them to know that the grief of such had that in it which was dearer and better than all their joy. My Sally knew it, and it has made her a spirit in heaven. I sit and think over all that happened, but there is not a soul on earth to whom I can tell it.”

“ If you could think me worthy of it,” said Tom, “ I would ask you to tell me her story.”

“’Tis a sad one, but will not hold you long,” said the mother ; “for Sally’s life was a short and simple one. She was to have been married to an industrious and kind hearted lad. They knew each other when quite children ; and grew more and more into a love for each other as they grew in years. And if their attachment did not shew the breaks and passions of those which happen later, it was, I think, deeper seated in its quiet, and seemed to be a part of the existence of both of them. Could you have seen them, as I have, sitting on that very form where you now are, so gentle and happy in each other, you would not wonder that it wrings my heart, now they are both gone from me. But there was a snake crawling and shining in the grass. His eye fell before the pure eye of Sally, yet he could not give over. I dare not speak his name, lest I should curse him, and Sally forgave him, and prayed for his soul on her death bed. The Evil One was busy in his heart, and thwarted and enraged, with his passions wrought up, he attempted that by force, which he did not dare name to her. Though she was of a gentle make, there was no want of spirit in her, and the wretch liked to have fallen by her hand. ‘Thank

God,' she has said to me, 'that I did not take his life.'

"She came home, shaking and pale with what had happened, and frightened at the danger she had escaped. Frank met her at the door, and asking her eagerly what was the matter, she hinted, hastily, enough for him to guess the rest. He sprang from the door, with an oath—the first that I ever heard him utter.—She called loudly after him, but he was out of sight in an instant. She looked the way he had gone, almost breathless. 'I spared him,' said she, at last, 'but he may not—he may not.' It was but a little while before Frank came home. He staggered into the house, and fell back into a chair. 'What have you done? Speak, tell me what you have done,' cried Sally. 'You have not, you have not murdered'—Frank grasped his throat, to stop its beating. 'No, no,' said he, scarcely to be heard. 'I struck him but once, and he lay like a dead body before me; and I thought it was all over with him; but he presently opened his eyes upon me, and I dared not stay, for I felt the spirit of a murderer at my heart.' He looked, at the moment," said the old woman, "as if he dropped the very knife from his hand.

“And here,” said she, “the storm began to gather fast and hard. The coward villain found means to raise suspicions against Frank, which threw him out of his employments. Yet so secret was he, as not to be suspected of the deed. The poor fellow wandered over these bare hills day after day, without knowing what to turn his hands to. In the midst of all this trouble the wretch came to him, and begged forgiveness for his conduct to Sally. ‘I can forgive you,’ said Frank, ‘but I do not like looking upon you.’ ‘That is not forgiveness,’ said he, in a mournful and beseeching tone. ‘I was a villain, for I would have done you an injury past remedy. And it was more than I deserved, that you should have spared my life when I was down. I have not had a quiet rest since that time, and never shall, if you don’t suffer me to do something to make amends.’ ‘The best amends,’ said Frank, ‘will be a better life in you.’ ‘I know it,’ he answered, ‘and I hope it will be so, if remorse can give it. But you, too, must give me ease. Though young, my allowance is large. Some evil mind has worked you mischief, I’m told, and you are poor. I do not ask you to take my money as your own—I have no right to. But

do at least show me that you have so far forgiven me, as to suffer me to lend it you, and see you well established in your trade. It is the only atonement left me, and you will not cut me off from that.' Frank refused, and the villain begged like a slave. Frank began to think it was sinful pride, and he thought of Sally, and then he consented. The money was lent, and as soon as Frank had laid it out in stock for trade, the note was put in suit, and he was stripped of all he had and thrown into gaol. Frank found a friend who released him ; and he went to sea. And think," said she, turning to Tom, " he that contrived it all was scarcely older than you are now ; and yet he wears a gay heart and fair outside.

" I need not tell of the parting. It was a bitter one, and no meeting after it. There was a storm at sea, and the ship went down. And many a night have I lain and seen his body heaved up wave after wave, as they took it, one after another, till they bore it away, far, far out of sight. The news came at last ; yet she shed no tear, nor spoke a word ; but her silence was awful—it was like a spirit near me. For many days she sat in that corner with her hands

clasped, and resting on her knees, looking with a glazed eye upon the fire ; and I thought I saw her pining away before me as she sat there. At last she would leave the house at night-fall, when it was chilly autumn, and when the crisped, frozen grass would break under her feet. And I have found her standing on the top of the hill near, many and many a night, with her eyes fixed on the moon, her lips moving and giving a low sound, of what, I could not tell. Nor would she look at me, nor mind that I was by. And I have led her home, and laid her shivering in her bed, and she took no heed of me. At last the cold winds and snow struck her ; but as she lay there on the bed, her mind opened,—it did not wander any more. She said that but one being had done her wrong, and though it was an awful wrong, she was sure that she forgave him, and would pray that he might be forgiven.

“Just before she died, she stretched out her hand to me,—she saw me look at it. ‘It was a fresh hand once, but is dead and shrunken now ; and there are the blue veins,’ said she, tracing them with one of her fingers, ‘where the blood used to flow warm and quick, but they are dried up, though they stand out so. I am going to peace,

mother, and to him that loved me.' The tears fell on her pillow, as she said, 'who will take care of you in your old age?' Then looking upward, and with a bright smile over her face, and without turning towards me,—'God, my mother, God will take care of you.' I felt it like a revelation from heaven.

"She died, and I laid her where she wished to be in that grave you saw by the stream,—for you spoke of one, did you not? I bring water from that stream morning and night; and when the weather is calm, I stop and pray at her grave, and in the driving storm I utter my prayer in the spirit, as I pass by,—and with God it is the same, if it comes from a sincere heart. My story is done," said she, in a low tone. "'Tis late, and you have walked far, and there is a clean bed, though a hard one, for you in the next room." Tom wished her good night; but she did not answer him,—he saw that she could not. "O, Isaac Beckford," murmured she, as Tom shut the door, "there is a heavy sin on your soul; may there be mercy in heaven for you." Tom did not hear the name, nor suspect his friend.

Though he rose early, he found breakfast ready. The hostess looked cheerful, for every

affliction has its comfort to the christian.—“And now,” said he, moving back from the table, “how am I to find my way to the city?”

“Look,” said the old woman, going to the door, “yonder you see the wood which borders this heath, and there are the chimnies of Beckford mansion, and the great road winds near it. You will see no smoke there, though a clear morning,—’tis an empty house now. The heath brought you a short rout, for ’tis only a dozen miles, or so, to town. Nigh enough, I fear, to such a place, for one who has passions like yours.”

“What know you of my passions, good woman,” said Tom, “what have you heard of me?”

“Naught in the world. But do I not see them in the moving of your lip, and the gleam of that eye? Rein them with a steady hand, or they may prove of too hot metal for you.” Tom thanked her, and then offered her money. “You came as a cast-away,” said she, “and I cannot take it.” He tendered it again. “No, no,” she said, mournfully, “I cannot take fare-money of one who has listened to my story.” Tom urged her no further, but wishing her, kindly, good morning, sat out on his way. As he drew

near the city, the roads grew crowded, and his spirits rose. "What a mighty stir is here—and what a medley! Things of all sorts, from horse-cart and check frock to coach and laces! And who is merriest of the crowd, it would be hard to tell. At last came the hubbub and rattle of the city. "One needs a speaking trumpet, to be heard here," said Tom.

By dint of inquiry, a quick eye and ready mind, he at last found the street, and the number of the house of Beckford's guardian. The servant made Tom's arrival known to Isaac. "What, my young *protégé*!" exclaimed Isaac to himself—"and in good time; for soon I shall be a free man, and he must minister to my pleasure, as must every one whom I favour. I must see that he is brought up in the way he should go."

With a deliberate step and plotting mind, he walked down stairs; but rushing swiftly into the room, and running to Tom, he seized him round the shoulders, with a hearty God bless you, and how are you, my old buck." This welcome was a cordial to Tom's heart; for, with all his high spirits, the manner of his leaving home, and what he had passed through since, had depressed him and made him thought-

ful ; and he was ill at ease with himself. After many questions about old playmates, and jokes upon past school tricks, Tom told Isaac that he wished to see him where they should not be interrupted.

"To be sure you shall," said Isaac, stepping into a side room, and locking the door after them. "But what is all this for ; you've no game afoot here already, surely ; or has some hare scaped you ? If so, 'tis I must start her again. I've the scent of a hound, Tom."

"A good quality," said Tom ; "not wanted now, however. I'll tell you what it is." And he told the whole story.

"A pretty child you, to quarrel with your bread and butter. A lad of metal truly. But does one show his spirit, for the sake of getting a broken head ? You must put yourself under my care. I see no reason why we can't live pleasantly enough without the old folks, till your father repents ; which I warrant will be shortly. In the mean time," said Isaac, scanning Tom as he spoke, "there must be a change from top to toe."

"I've no money," said Tom.

"I have, though," said Isaac ; " so give yourself no concern." Tom coloured. He had not thought of this before. Isaac burst into a loud laugh.

" Give me leave," said he, as soon as he could speak. " Why, you look as you did when caught by your master stealing his rod. There is no other way for you—if you wo'nt suffer me a trifling favour, you must bilk the tailor."

" I tell you what," said Tom ; " I would be under such obligations to no man living but you. And I like not that even. Money favours are but poor bonds of friendship."

" Pshaw," said Isaac, " your father will pay all ; and should he be stiff about it, if I credit him, and lose, what's that to you ? So, now for a merry year or two to come."

" Not so fast," said Tom ; " I want your assistance, but in another way. You've influential friends. I did not come here for sport. I'm for sea, and sea-fights." Isaac gave him a questioning look. "'Tis even so, I'm set upon it, Isaac."

" Well then, so be it. But first, come, see my guardian."

Isaac was right in his conjecture about Mr. Thornton. His wife's anxiety concerning the fate of her son, and the reflection that he had been hasty and unjust towards him, led the old gentleman to write Isaac's uncle (he had little doubt whither Tom had gone). Mr. Beckford stated, in his answer, Tom's desire to go into the navy; and it was concluded that Tom should have a moderate supply of money, and be furthered in his intent, without knowing any thing of his father's share in the business. Isaac therefore appeared as principal, and he took care to increase his influence by it; but he could not turn Tom from his purpose, and he did not like to thwart his rich uncle.

Thornton's mind was so full of ships and the seas, of fights and promotion, that Isaac saw it was impossible to sink him in dissipation at once. "Whatever is that lad's object," said Beckford, "is a passion with him for the time. I must give him line."

"Are you going to run me through, Tom?"

"I was only boarding the enemy."

"That coat is of the true cut, Tom."

"It sits no more to the shape of a man, than

to a partridge. When I am admiral, Isaac,—
as I shall be”——

“ God save you, admiral !”

“ I’ll do.”

“ What will you do ?”

“ Pay you the tailor’s bill, for having made me such a thing to show clothes on. Let’s to the ship.—She sits on the water,” said Tom, as they were carried towards her, “ as if she were born of the sea. And then again so tall, and light, and graceful, she seems a creature of the air.”——

A few days before sailing, he received a guarded letter from his mother. He threw it angrily upon the table. “ No, no,” said he to himself, “ this was written under the hard eye of my father.” And he wrote an answer full of affection and high hopes.

As Tom had always resolved to command a ship of war, he had made good use of his time at school to learn all but what practice gives. With a quick insight into whatever he turned his attention to, his many and appropriate inquiries and close and wide observation soon made him familiar with all that could be acquired in port, and to be ready for much that the sea would teach him.

There was a stiff breeze and a clear blue sky, and the whole air was raying with the sun, when Tom bade farewell to Isaac. His brave, fiery, open temper, made young Beckford's sly, cautious, and vicious disposition seem despicable and weak even to himself, and he was fixed upon revenge, with a deadly purpose. He was one of that race who carry a hell within them—who, placed in the rank of ordinary beings, and wanting the bold and sustaining spirit of open hostility, bear secret hate to all above them.

"This is life," said Tom, as he stood looking out on the ocean. "The unseen winds make music over-head; the very ship rejoices in the element in which she moves, and the sea on which we are opening, looking limitless as eternity, heaves as if there were life in it."

Tom had high notions of a ship's discipline, and submitted with a good grace. "And so will I be obeyed," said he to himself, "when my turn comes." Though among his fellow-officers his manner was too impetuous, yet there was something so hearty and frank in it, that they could not take offence. He exacted perfect obedience where he commanded, but was free from cruelty. He was continually learning of experienced offi-

cers ; nor did he suffer the slightest thing which could be of use, to escape his observation. They visited foreign ports ; and with a curiosity all alive and perpetually gratified, this earth was like a new world to him.

At last came the news of a war, and Tom rubbed his hands like an epicure over a smoking dinner. "A bloody battle, and I shall mount,—or fall, and another walk over me—all the same to the world." At last was given the cry of, 'a sail ;' and Tom saw a ship ahead rising up, as it were, slowly and steadily out of the sea, as she neared. As she tacked to the wind, he gazed upon her almost with rapture.—"Queen of the sea," cried he, "how silently and beautifully and stately she bears herself !"

"A heavy ship," said an older officer.

"She's a superb bird of passage," answered Tom, "fit messenger for the gods. 'Tis a pity, but we must bring her down."—A distant fire was opened. He looked disappointed and impatient that so little was done.

"You will be gratified to your heart's content presently, young man. We shall have no boys' play to-day."

"Nor do I want it," he answered. "Let it come hot and heavy." And his eye brightened and spirits rose, the closer and harder the fight became.

In the midst of this, the enemy's mainmast swayed once or twice, then came a crash and a cry, and it went by the board. Tom shuddered, and shut his eyes convulsively, as he saw the poor fellows go with it. All was in a moment forgotten, when the ship he was in, falling on the other's bow, the cry, 'to board,' was heard. He jumped upon the enemy's deck with the spring of a tiger. They gave way. He was foremost through the fight, with a wet brow and clotted hand. In a few minutes the deck was cleared of all but the dead and dying. All was bustle and joy on one side; and Tom's heart swelled, when the captain in his warmth shook him heartily by the hand. But no one envied him, so meekly did he bear it. He stepped back a little; a dying man gave his last groan at his feet. Tom started, and looking down, saw the sightless, open eyes of the dead man turned up towards him. It shrunk his very heart up. "And has this been my sport?" said he. "God forgive me." The prize was sent home, and Tom went in

her, second in command, with a favourable notice of his conduct.

"I am worn with this incessant heave of the sea," said Tom, as he hung over the ship's side, "and long to be ashore, and smell the earth again, and mix in the occupations of men. The moon shines as fair here, and looks as happy, showing her dimpled face in the water, as if she had all the world to worship her. The sky and earth hold blessed and silent communion, which we, who crawl about here, think not of. Would I could share in it, and mingle with the air, and be all a sensation too deep for sound—a traveller amongst the stars, and filled with light. I am a thing of clay—a creature of sin," he murmured, as he turned, and went to his cabin.

The rim of the sea was of gold, when the sun was wheeled slowly up, and burnished the whole ocean. The light flashed up into Thornton's cabin windows. His soul enlarged itself as he looked out upon this life of the world. Going upon deck, he found there an officer.

"What, up before me?"

"Yes, I've been watching the harbour light, till it went out like the morning star." Tom

turned, and the gay islands that laid softly upon the sea, looked to him like messengers sent to welcome him to land ; and as he made the shore, the very dark rocks seemed sociable, as if they had come down to meet him. He landed with an exulting spirit amidst the cheers of the populace, and hearty congratulations of the few acquaintances he had formerly left behind. Isaac was not amongst them ; and upon inquiry, Thornton learned that he was out of town at old Mr. Beckford's, late his guardian. As soon as Tom could leave the city, he drove out thither.

As he dashed along with a speed that made the fields and trees appear hurrying by him, he thought of the time when he trudged the same road afoot, and an out-cast, and not noticed of a passer-by. "I always felt that I should rise, and make men look up at me ; and I will be higher yet e'er long. Neither will it be a gallows elevation, as my father prophesied in his anger. What a triumph I have gained over them ! They shall not fail to hear of it in full, and that shortly. What a selfish wretch am I ! Whose hearts, in all the world, will be prouder and gladder than their's at my success ?"—He whirled up the circular way to the house, and sprang to the ground

as light as if buoyed by the air. There was one who saw him from behind the window-curtain. "What a gallant fellow," said she! "He descended to the earth like one of the gods. What a form! Who can it be? It must be young Thornton. Yes, the whole face tallies with what I've heard of his daring and impetuous character. Heigh-ho, I wonder what's become of Mr. Henley. I hope he has not broken his poor neck, and rid himself of his million of complaints at once."

Tom followed the servant, and came so suddenly upon Isaac, that he was not prepared to make his usual demonstrations of joy. Tom felt it for an instant. But Isaac, seeing his error, began repairing it, by asking question after question, hardly giving Tom time to answer one of them, and expressing all the while the warmest joy at his success.

"Well, Tom, half a dozen years have done much for you."

"Yes, and I mean that six to come shall do more."

"Well resolved, as usual, and surely, I've no doubt; for you have fire and skill to melt and cast to your liking. Come along, and take a

look at my fair cousin—cousin I call her, though a third remove. But, have a care, my boy, for her worn out rake of a husband knows what a woman is, and has a lynx's eye."

There is nothing better calculated to put a man in a woman's power, than bidding him be on his guard against her; for he at once imagines that he may be an object of interest to her, and that there is something in her worth being a slave to.

When Thornton entered the room, the sun was down, but the deep clouds were on fire with his light, and threw their warm glow upon a rich crimson sofa, on which rested, clad in white drapery, the beautiful Mrs. Henley. She was leaning on her elbow which sunk into a cushion, raising her a little, giving a luxurious curvature to the body, and showing the limbs in all their fine proportions and fulness. Her wrist, a little bent, shone with a dazzling whiteness, while her fingers were half hid among the leaves of a costly book. Her fairy foot, in a white satin slipper, was playing in the deep flounce of the sofa, and as she rose with a pretended embarrassment, the exquisitely turned ankle glanced for an instant on Thornton's sight. Something shot

through his breast with the acuteness of an electric shock ; and it was with difficulty that he could give utterance to the passing compliments. His confusion was not unobserved by Isaac or the lady ; and they were both determined to turn it to their purpose, but from very different motives.

Mrs. Henley lived in Isaac's neighbourhood long before her marriage ; and her fine person and beautiful face, and the slow, wavy outline which deep passion gave to her movements, had excited in him, to an intense degree, all that he was capable of feeling for a woman. The loose and evil passions were strong in him ; and as he was without true courage, he gratified them by ingenuity and trick. When such persons are understood, the men despise, and the women loathe them. All his endeavours to ingratiate himself with his cousin, only made him the more disgusting to her ; for when he was most intent upon pleasing her, his manner was a mixture of fawning and condescension, which moved her contempt and touched her pride. And sometimes she revenged herself by cold disdain, at others, by turning him to ridicule with her playful and ready wit. But Isaac could submit to be

trodden on, so he could gain his object, or compass his revenge ; and he swore Fanny should be Mrs. Beckford, or rue the day she married another. He had failed in his first purpose, and was now wholly bent on vengeance. He saw the effect that Tom had produced on her, and that he was not untouched. Isaac's plan was formed ; and though he had determined to make Tom a mere instrument for his own end, he hated him for that very preference which had been shown him, though it made him more easily his tool.

Fanny, with all her hate of Isaac, would have been Mrs. Beckford, had no better establishment offered. She was selfish, of strong passions, regardless of principles, of unbounded extravagance and ambition, with a mind somewhat tasteful, yet fond of the showy, of high spirit, and of quick intellect (which, in fashionable society, answers all the purposes of wit,) and with art to appear whatever she chose to be at the time. She was balancing in secret the *pros* and *cons* of a marriage with Isaac, when Mr. Henley, who had wasted one fortune early in life, now suddenly presented himself with a broken constitution and fretful disposition, but

with a large estate, to which he had just succeeded, and she in due time became Mrs. Henley. She soon devoted herself to spending his fortune, and leaving him to his doctor and nurse.

"Why, Tom," said Isaac, in a laughing way, but with a malignant purpose, "you were as careless and easy in company of the ladies before you went to sea, as you were at our whist club; but you look as awkward now as some Jonathan, who is working himself up to a tender of himself and kine, to a country maiden. Does the salt water always have such an effect?"

"If it does," said Fanny, "there are more virtues in a sea voyage than I have before heard of; and it might be a benefit to some whom I had long put down on the list of incurables."

"Why, coz, one so pretty as you should only shoot cupid's arrows, and not wound us with those of wit."

"'Tis pity it should have mischiefed you; I but shot it o'er the house."

"And wounded your brother."

"Something too much akin, that, Isaac."

"Then you are not for the platonic?"

"Not with a handsome youth like you."—
Isaac bit his lip; and Tom laughed.

"Why, Isaac, did I ever before see you foiled at an encounter of wits? Your's have grown dull since I left you. Have them sharpened—have them sharpened, Isaac."

"So do, Isaac, and on your heart," she whispered, "it will serve."

"I will," he muttered to himself, "and that you shall find to your cost, ye young ones."

At that moment Mr. Henley entered, leaning on the arm of old Mr. Beckford, who, now far advanced in life, was of a cheerful, fresh and benevolent aspect. Mr. Beckford shook Thornton heartily by the hand, and welcomed him well ashore. The other was a tall, stooping, gaunt figure, with a sallow and thin face, dark, hanging eyebrows, and a glancing, cautious eye. With all this, he showed the remains of a handsome person, and was what is commonly called a polished gentleman. He received Tom with a courtly distance.

"My dear," said his wife, affecting concern, "you don't know how uneasy I've been about you."

"Perhaps not," he replied, without regarding her, and in a low monotone, as if talking to himself.

"I'm really afraid you have caught your death this cool evening."

"O, you're too anxious about me; I do not feel myself dying quite yet," he answered in the same manner. Tom ground his teeth against each other, at these surly replies.

They met at breakfast; and the rich evening dress was changed for a simple robe; and Fanny looked as fair as if she had bathed in the dew of roses. When the uncle and husband were out of the way, Isaac gave such a turn to the conversation, as would lead to his object. Then he proposed a walk in the little wood near the house; and when they had entered it, suddenly remembered some particular business, and left Tom and his cousin together. The light shawl caught in the branches, and what less could Tom do, than adjust it carefully over the finest shoulders in the world, unless we except the Venus—but hers are not living shoulders. There was a brook to pass, and an unsightly tree lying rudely across the path, and last of all happened that fatal though common accident—and the shoe lacing was seen trailing the ground.

Before many days Tom had lost all control over himself. He had but one feeling and one thought.

Isaac saw that affairs were going too fast. "The husband will be upon the trail, and the sport will be all up. We must have doublings and crossings!"

The husband was not so quicksighted as Isaac feared. He had always been jealous of his wife, and not without reason. Jealousy, however, like most passions, discriminates but poorly; and Mr. Henley had been as much alarmed and as impatient at little circumstances, a thousand times before, as he was at what was passing now.

The uncle, who was a looker-on, and knew well the wife's character and Tom's ardent temperament, joined with Isaac, though from opposite motives, in urging Tom to hasten his visit to his father, from whom he had received a kind letter calling him home. He had not lost his affection for his parents, but he was completely infatuated. Day after day was fixed for the visit, and it was as many times put off. "I will propose going with him, and to-morrow," said Isaac to himself. "I am not ready for the catastrophe. He must be more in my power. He must rake, he must game, he must want money." For the passion which Isaac saw in

his cousin, for young Thornton, had worked up towards him the hate of a fiend.

After much urging, Tom was ready, and they started. It was in vain that Isaac endeavoured to draw him into conversation. At length his home appeared in sight. It gave Tom the first happy feeling he had been conscious of since leaving Beckford house. It was with sincere joy he saw his parents, and his mother's tears touched his heart. With all his affection, Tom grew restless in a day or two, and pleaded his duties as a reason for his return. The old gentleman had received from Mr. Beckford a letter, hinting at Tom's dangerous situation. He took his son aside, and talked kindly and earnestly with him upon the subject. Tom at first denied that there was any thing to fear.—“Look carefully into your heart,” said his father. Tom did, and then swore that he would think no more of her.—“Oaths will not do it, Tom; the mind must be bent up to fly the temptation, or you run to your ruin.”—Tom promised to himself and to his father that he would; but the next day hastened to it with speed of fire.—“I cannot show her indifference at meeting, but at least I will appear composed,” thought he.

Isaac caught a glimpse of his cousin, and made an excuse for leaving the carriage, before reaching the house. Thornton met her in the entry. She sprang forward towards him; then shrinking back, and glowing with what Tom took for shame, let fall her beautifully fringed lids. He spoke in a tremulous voice. She uttered a broken word or two; then lifting her eyes to his, showed them drinking deep of passion. He would that instant have folded her to him, but a step was heard in the room. He darted out of the house, muttering between his teeth something of his disappointment, and a curse on the fool who caused it.

He walked on, his brain maddened with the tumult of passions within him. He was not sensible whither he was going, till he suddenly saw at his feet the grave of Sally Wentworth. He recoiled from it like a fallen angel from the presence of the holy; and his abominations rose up before him, black and awful. He felt like an out-cast from heaven, as if the very dead condemned him, and shut him out as a creature unfit to lie down in rest with them.

“The dead, the dead, no passions are torturing them; but shall I ever shake off mine?” He

was leaning upon the grave-stone,—his eyes fixed on the grave,—shuddering at his own passions, and thinking on the quiet below him, when some one spoke.—“Thomas Thornton,” said the voice, “it is well for us to be here.” He turned suddenly, and met the solemn, but mild countenance of Sally’s mother. She observed the dark expression of his face.

“That should not be the face of one who holds communion with the dead,” said she. “What ails thee, man,—thou lookest like one condemned for his crimes, yet afraid to die. ’Tis an awful thing so to live, as to fear to die.”

“It is not death I fear, good mother, it is life,—it is myself.”

“And dare ye fear to live, and yet not dread to die, Thornton? There is a double and a woful curse on thee then.”

“Do not curse me, and standing here, too, lest the dead sanction it.”

“No, she that lies here, cursed not him that brought misery upon her. Neither would I, thee. It becomes not us to condemn one another. But I fear for you, Thornton, I fear for you. And did I not, the morning you left me, warn you take heed to your passions?—I cannot talk with

others here," said she, partly to herself, and looking on her daughter's grave.—She turned away, and he followed her.

"I have looked to see you, day after day," she said, as they walked towards the house; "for I have taken more concern in you, than I ever thought to again in fellow mortal. It has been whispered me how you left home the night you knocked at my door; and it did my heart good to hear, a few days ago, that you had gone to see your father and mother. Nor for that alone was I glad, but that it might break the web that I saw a subtle spider weaving over you."—Thornton coloured. "You have not darkened this door," said she, as they drew up to the cottage. "My eye has been upon you, nevertheless, at the house yonder." They both turned towards it.

"'Tis she!" cried out Thornton, "where can she have been?"

"Here, no doubt, and for no good purpose, I fear. For little have I seen of her for months past; and now she has but just missed you," added the old woman, casting a look of rebuke upon Tom. His cheek flushed a deep, burning red; but his eager and impatient eye was

fixed, like a hound in leash, on the figure at a distance. He stood for a moment silent, and leaning forward. "How this heath opens wide, round about her, that the world may see her move! I must be gone, good mother."

"Hold, hold," said the old woman, laying her hand on his arm, and fastening her eye on his fiery countenance, "art mad?"

"Mad? Ah, mad as the winds. She'll be beyond reach instantly. I must go."

"By the spirit of her whose grave you just stood by," said the old woman in a low voice, "I bid you stay." His hands fell powerless, but his eye still rested on the object. She was ascending a rising ground; and as she reached the top of it, and her form appeared against a burnished evening sky, her long purple mantle waving in the winds, "she touches not earth," he cried, "but moves in glory amidst the very clouds."

"Monster!" cried the old woman, in a tone of horror; and, lifting her finger, said, "can you look yonder, and worship any but God?" The voice went through him like a word from heaven.

“Mother, forgive me,” said he, humbled and ashamed.

“Ask forgiveness of him you have offended, and not of me.” As she looked upon him, her heart yearned towards him as a mother’s for her child.—He raised his eyes timidly towards the west once more, but she, whom he sought, had gone down the hill, and was out of sight. His countenance fell.

“Would that she could pass so from your mind !”

“Would that I could be taught to wish it,” he murmured.

“Turn then,” said she, pointing to the sky, “and learn to love the works, that God has made, and still keeps innocent. They are his messengers to us, the ministers of his power, the revealers of his love for us. To rejoice in them, to feel the heart moved by them, is true worship. O ! I have stood, at an hour like this, and looked, till I have thought the light of heaven was opened to me, and God was near me.”—She turned once more towards Thornton. His countenance had become calm and elevated.—“My son,” said she, “could you learn to fill yourself with such thoughts as are now within you, the allurements

of the world would be a tasteless show to you. But the heart must love something,—it must be sin or goodness.”—There was a short pause. At last said the old woman, “She you hunt after is another’s. She vowed herself his at the altar, and if it is a stain on her soul, would it for that be less a sin in you to wrong him?”

“I would wrong no man,” said Thornton.

“What! can you say how far you will go, when you cannot stop now?”

“I will, I will,” he answered, “even now.”

“Beware that you stumble not through too much confidence. Turn away from the temptation; for she who tempts you, I fear, is eager to draw you on. I would not speak it of her but for your good,” said the old woman, the colour coming to her pale cheek—“for she was my foster-child, and has slept in these arms, and I loved her next to my own. But ambition and vanity and all unchecked passions have been busy at her heart. It was for houses and lands and a high place in the world, that she bartered herself; and she who will do that by holy covenant, may one day do it without bond. You are now going into the world again; but carry with you, if you would have mercy on your soul,

what I have said ; and as you keep it with you, so, I trust, heaven will bless you."

He grasped her hand, and then turned and walked homeward. She looked after him till he was lost in the twilight ; then went into her house with a sunken and misgiving heart.

Thornton went directly to his chamber. He was afraid of Isaac's ridicule, and dared not trust himself with a sight of Mrs. Henley. He was melancholy and humbled ; but there was a virtue in his state of mind, which made him less impatient of himself than he had been for many weeks past. He thought of the widow and her daughter—of death, and what's to come, and his passions subsided, and the storm and wreck of the mind seemed clearing and settling away, and he had the quiet sleep of a good man. But the light and stir of day, which scatter our resolves and fill us with the present, came on ; and the gay and beautiful vision of Fanny broke upon him with the morning sun.

He sprang from bed ; and in his eagerness to hasten down stairs, every thing was out of place, and fretting him with delay. None but domestics were up. He walked out a few steps, and then returned, and thus continued till the break-

fast hour arrived. He met only Mr. Beckford and Isaac at table. His eye was constantly on the door.—“Mr. Henley and lady left us about dusk last night, for the city,” said the old gentleman. Thornton’s countenance changed.—“I fear you will never be a gallant,” said Isaac. “To think that you should not be here, to bid so fair a lady farewell! But you may make such amends as you can, for we all move town-ward to-morrow.”

The next day they reached the city.—“Make yourself ready,” said Isaac, “for we are to go to Henley’s to-night, you know.” As they passed along the streets, the brilliantly lighted shops, the gay faces and talk within them, and then the shadow of some building thrown in straight line across the pavement, and some one stealing through it in silence, gave a sudden contrast, and a strange mixture of open gayety, and mysterious stillness to the scene, which excited Thornton’s mind, at the same time that he felt a cautious fearfulness stealing over him. Then was heard the distant rumbling of a carriage—presently it would shoot by them with a stunning rattling of the wheels, and sharp clatter of the horses’ hoofs, every now and then

striking fire, and all would die away again in the distance and darkness.

They at length reached the superb mansion of Mr. Henley. It was like entering into broad daylight. It shone like the fairy palaces in the Arabian Nights. And there she stood under a large chandelier, richly and splendidly dressed ; her fair skin sparkling with an almost metallic brightness, and her eyes full of light and action. At the first glance she coloured ; but recovering herself with a practised readiness, gave Thornton a frank welcome, at the same time introducing him to the circle about her. Those who observed his confusion, set it down to bashfulness, and as such, passed it by. She was in full spirits, talked much and brilliantly ; and his grand figure and face, his honest vehemence and hearty good nature, drew round them the choicest part of the company. Then came the dance with all its windings and wavy motions, and her soft hand rested too long in his. The fingers of each trembled, and told what they should not. The flame was again lighted up within him, and it rose and swept along with the rush and desolation of a forest fire. He lingered as long as Isaac dared let him ; and was at last half drawn

away by him from the house. He passed the remainder of the night, at one time calling himself a madman and villain, and then, in his hot impatience, swearing that no earthly power should bar him his way. The thought of her now fully possessed him. She saw the power she had over him, and loved it too well to risk it, by too easily yielding to his passion. He had no rest out of her presence, followed her wherever she went, and was at her house, morn- and evening.

“Tom,” said Isaac, one day, “do you know that the world begin to talk about you, and my sweet coz?”

“I care not for their talk. What have they to do with me or her?”

“Much, my young blood, so long as you make a part of the world. And it is something to me, Tom, and touches me nearly. You know not your danger; but I must not let you bring disgrace upon any of our relations, however distant. Besides, the husband grows suspicious; and would you spill his blood, or throw so fine a girl out from fortune?”

“God forbid,” said he warmly. “Yet, I know not, Isaac,—my power has gone. Save me, save me.”

“And so I will, if you’ll be a man. We must change the scene ; and you shall see some good fellows, and be as merry as ever, I warrant ye. Come along with me.”

Tom followed as if all self-will was gone. And he talked and laughed and had his joke, and was called a lad of spirit. He drank to excess, and grew restiff. The cool Isaac kept an eye upon him, without being observed, and took him off in time. “This will suffice for a beginning,” said Isaac to himself. “We will minister a little more freely next time.”

Thornton waked languid, and full of remorse ; still he found himself in a few hours at Henley house. Isaac did not try to prevent it. He was only retarding the accomplishment of Tom’s wishes, that he might ruin him altogether. Then came more riot and excess, and lastly, gambling. And Tom played rashly and lost ; for he was trying to fly from himself, and cared not for fortune. And Isaac lent him money now and then, and oftener

found other friends to furnish him.—All was ripening for Isaac's purposes.

In the midst of this, Tom received a letter from his father, written in the anguish of the mind, and calling upon his son, if he would not blast an old man's hopes, to leave the city and come to him. The letter spoke of Tom's mother, her distress, and the fondness with which, in the midst of it, she clung to her only child. Tom stamped upon the floor, and tearing his hair in the agony of his feelings, cursed himself as the vilest wretch alive. "I will go to them," cried he, "I'll go, by to-morrow's light." The morning came, and then he thought of taking an eternal farewell and the like. He lingered, and Mrs. Henley's carriage drove by. There was a familiar nod, and a smile, and his resolutions were again gone with the wind. That night he played, and lost, and grew angry almost to madness. Then came a duel,—he was wounded, and called a man of honour.

In a day or two he was able to visit at Henley's. Nothing interests a fashionable woman half so much, as a genteel young fellow with his arm in a sling, particularly if he received his hurt in a duel. Mrs. Henley turned pale when

she saw Thornton, spoke breathingly of his wound, and asked a thousand kind questions about it.—“The arm hangs a little too low; let me shorten the handkerchief.” And standing before him, her arms were round his neck, as she was trying to untie the knot. Their hearts beat quick. Thornton could control himself no longer, but prest her madly to him. Her head sunk upon his shoulder, while she murmured that he would be her ruin. There were vows of eternal love, and protestations of honour, and an assignation—and all made at once. The last was not kept, for Mr. Henley left town early the next day, compelling his wife to accompany him. He had heard and seen enough to confirm his suspicions. He did not want courage to call Tom out, but relished little the thought of being pointed at as the unhappy man who had been engaged in an affair of honour with his wife’s friend.

When Thornton called in the morning, the house was shut up. He rung, but no one came to the door. After walking some time before the house, he returned to inquire of Isaac whither they had gone. Isaac could only conjecture. Tom uttered the direst imprecations upon the

jealous dolt's head. Isaac affected to be amused at Tom's wrath.

"Why, the wench has jilted you, my young sprig. You stood shill-I shall-I too long." But he bit his lips, and swore inwardly; for all his plotting had come to nothing.—"I'll hunt them the world through," cried Tom, "ere I'll be thus thwarted."

He went to his chamber, and found on his table a letter, showing the greatest alarm in his mother, for his father's life. "What! does death cross between me and her," exclaimed he, wildly. His blood curdled with horror at the thought of what he had uttered.—"She has made me a child of hell," he cried in the agony of the passions fighting within him. "Let me be gone, let me be gone from this place of sin." He reached home in time to close his father's eyes and lay him in his grave. ~~There~~ was something more than grief in him for his father's death. It was the fear that he had hastened it on. "He was proud of me," said Tom to himself, "hair-brained as I was. And I gave him hope, and in the midst of it, let a woman, who perhaps has forgotten me, cut it off; and I've laid him in his grave, sorrowful and disap-

pointed. He had a soul of honour ; and I, who was his son, did all I could to debase him.”

The grief of his mother and her imploring helplessness, took Thornton's mind off from its regret and painful thoughts, while it softened his heart, and laid it open to those kind and gentle affections, against which it had for a long time been shut. His manner to her was as mild, and soothing, and regardful, as if no headlong passions had ever stirred him. There was something almost parental in it. And when the time came that he should adjust his father's affairs, in order to go to sea again, he was delicate and generous towards his mother, to an extreme.

When the hour arrived for him to leave her, she hung round him, and wept bitterly. “There is now no one, Thomas, but you left for me, in all the ~~world~~ earth, to lean upon ; and my soul cleaves to you as all betwixt me and death. Remember your fond old mother, when you are gone from her. You will think of me on the seas, but, forgive me, Tom, you may not in the city.”

“Think not so hardly of me, mother ; my heart is not all seared yet. Can I lose all thought of you any where, when, perhaps,” he said,

brushing a tear from his lash, "it is I who have made you so soon to be alone? No, I will remember you not only in sorrow and in hours of solitude and thoughtfulness, but bear you with me in my daily life, and think how dear are a mother's pride and joy in a good son."

And when he left her, he begged her blessing with as submissive and meek a feeling as ever entered man's soul. Intimate affections and beautiful thoughts were forever shooting up within him; but his passions would sweep over them like a strong wind, and leave them torn and dead in the dust.

He reached the city a few days before sailing. His composed, serious manner awed Isaac, and made him hate him more than ever. Thornton discharged his debts contracted with money lenders, and found enough left out of his father's estate to pay Isaac. Isaac would have put off receiving it.—"I shall never forget your kindness, said Tom. But I cannot see why you would keep a friend under such an obligation, and that too unnecessarily, and against his will." Isaac took the money without farther parley, with a resolution of persevering in Tom's ruin,

which, in a good cause, would have done honour to a saint.

Thornton more than once passed Henley house, as he strolled out in the night; and he would stand and look towards it, till the bright figure of her he thought on grew luminous to his mind; and he would follow it till his eyeballs ached, as it past off into the darkness. The passion had been laid for a time, but only to burst out more violently than ever. Before, it took possession of him in the uproar of the mind, but now, it had become mixed with his deepest sensations and most serious purposes.

In a few days the ship bore him from shore. He was gone two years; but in all countries, through the hot and successful fight, in storm and calm, the sense of this woman clung to him like his very being. And when he at last spied the gay city rising as it were out of the water, he leaped, like a child, for joy.—“Neither man, nor land, nor sea, shall keep me from her longer. Some devil may have possessed me, but I cannot, I will not, struggle any more. She’s mine, come on’t what may.”—And he was given over to his terrible passions, with little to thwart

them ; for he found the elegant Mrs. Henley a gay and splendid widow.

Thornton had returned, it was true, without money, but then he had the grandest face and figure in the world, and he was the talk of every body. Besides, as fascinating as the widow was, her character was a little worse than doubtful, and few men liked her extravagant and high spirit.

Isaac put in for her favours, and was repulsed. He was silent, but the wound rankled. Old Mr. Beckford warned Thornton. Tom grew angry and avoided him ; and Isaac helped on the match without appearing to do so. The old gentleman gave Mrs. Thornton notice ; and she wrote her son, imploring him to come to her, or, at least, not to plunge himself headlong into ruin. She called upon him in the name of his father, and as he cared for her life. It was all in vain ; he would hear nothing, he would see nothing ; he was married, and undone.

For a time, all was blaze and motion and sound. No house was furnished like the dashing Mrs. Thornton's, no parties half so splendid. No dinners so costly, and got up in such taste, as the captain's, and no one drove such a four-in-

hand. And if high life may in truth be called life, no one knew how to live better than the Thorntons. But it becomes our disease, it breaks up our thoughts, and kills our hearts, and makes what should be individual and fresh in us, common and stale. Politeness becomes feigning, and the play of the affections is lost in the practice of forms.

Thornton began soon to find it so ; and to relieve its satiety, he pushed farther into excesses. A kind of feeling, too, rather than reflection, was growing up in him that beauty, and high spirits, and a bright, ready intellect in a woman, would not stand in the stead of principle, and delicacy, and a fond heart. His pride also was hurt, that instead of being looked up to with kind regard, he was treated rather as an important part in a splendid establishment, that his fine person was praised, and elegant manners admired, and even his very mind valued, just so far as they served for an ornament, and a help to notoriety.

He received frequent letters from his mother complaining of his seldom writing, and his not coming to visit her in her deserted state. She spoke of her low spirits, her feeble health, and

her concern for him. Melancholy reflections were made, of a general nature, but such as he well knew how to apply to himself. He saw that her love of him, her disappointment and anxiety, were wearing her away, and the awful thought that he was hurrying her to the grave, crossed him in all his riot and excess.

The power over himself was gone ; he had become the slave of his passions ; and they bore him along with a never resting swiftness. He found the woman, for whom he had sacrificed all that was worthy in his character, selfish and regardless of his feelings. The disappointment made him hurry into dissipation with the craving appetite of a diseased man ; and Isaac was always a friend at hand, to assist him. His wife was no less extravagant than he ; and at last came borrowing and mortgages ; and squandering seemed to increase as their fortune lessened. He ran into gaming to retrieve his circumstances, but with galled feelings and fevered brain ; and it made his condition the more desperate.

Isaac's spirits rose, as he saw Thornton sinking. He, as before, assisted him in procuring loans, and lent him money besides.—“The day is near,” said Isaac, to himself, “in which I

shall live to see that lordly spirit brought down. And my other end shall be compassed too, let it cost me ever so dear. Yes, my proud madam must be supported in her magnificence; but the scorned and loathed Isaac must be wooed then like the dearest of men. What care I, though she feign it like the commonest of her sex, and curse me in the midst of it, in the bitterness of her heart,—does it not make fuller my revenge !”

And on he went, wily and playfully, to his object. Though he had a spirit of avarice not to be gluttoned, yet he would throw out his wealth like water, to sate his hate or lust. He caused information of Thornton’s circumstances to be given to one of the creditors. He took care to be at the house when service was made. Thornton’s wrath was beyond all bounds, he threatened the officer’s life, swore it was his wife who had brought him to disgrace and ruin, and cursed his folly that he had ever married. She said something sneeringly about half-pay captains. Tom’s eyes flashed fire, and Isaac became mediator.—“Upon my word, Thornton, my dear friend, you must command yourself, or this will get wind, and they will all be on you, like harpies. For heaven’s sake command your-

self.—My dear Sir, how great is the demand? Upon my soul, no trifling sum. Let me see,—I've a deposit for a certain purpose. I must contrive to meet that in another way; my friend must not be ruined thus." He made himself answerable to the officer.—"And here, Tom, you must give this as hush-money to the man. You have used him too roughly."—This was done in the presence of the wife.

Affairs had now nearly reached the worst. And Thornton's disappointments and troubles had almost made a madman of him. When heated with wine or loss at play, his rage made him dangerous, and he became the dread of his companions. Nothing but Isaac's plausible and smooth manner had any control over him, and with Isaac, Thornton was like a tiger with his keeper.

Old Mr. Beckford, with the best intentions, frequently wrote Tom's mother about him. It only served to hasten the wretched woman's decline, and drive him on the faster, that he might shake off the remorse which his mother's letters caused him.

Isaac never shut his eyes upon his object; and as Tom's utter ruin drew near, and the time had

almost come of fulfilling his plans, and accomplishing his last wish, it required all the hypocrisy of his nature not to break his purpose too soon to the wife. He knew that he had no strong virtue to struggle against, but something nearly as stubborn, a woman's dislike. And he played his part well; he was humble, he was grieved for their situation, he spoke timidly of his long contest with himself to overcome his love for her, and the misery it caused him; and shrunk back when he saw scorn writhing in her lip. Then he spoke of his fortune, and his wish that he had been worthy to have saved such a woman from poverty, and the neglect which a hard world might one day show her. And so he wound his way.

She hid not her contempt from him; she scrupled not to say that it was dread of poverty, and fall from high life, that made her yield to the man she despised—that she had seen through his designs long ago. Still he supplied her with money to support her extravagance; and she made him throw her husband's obligations into the fire before her, with his own hands. She yielded, and the man obtained that for which he

had hunted hard for years, and the devil had his triumph.

It lasted not long. Thornton's suspicions were awakened. He did not burst out in fury. Every passion within him settled down to a deathlike stillness. His mind seemed suddenly to take all the shrewdness and ingenuity of the crazed in effecting their object. And he traced out, step by step, all the windings of the subtle Isaac.

At last, he tracked him to the place of assignation; the entrance was barred. He broke it down with the strength of an enraged giant. Isaac fled through another passage, as Thornton entered. Thornton heeded not his wife; his soul was bent up to one purpose, and that a terrible one, and he saw no other object in the world. He followed with the speed of lightning; but passing swiftly by a narrow, dark side-passage, through which Isaac had escaped, missed his prey. He wound through all the passages of the house, with the eagerness of a blood-hound,—then through the by-lanes of the city, till he reached Beckford's house. He asked of the servants, in a perfectly composed manner, for Mr. Beckford. He had gone

out some time before, and had not returned. Thornton saw that they were not deceiving him. He walked the city the rest of the day, and returned at night to prepare himself for a journey, for he thought Isaac must have left town. In a little while he was ready ; but passed the night in further search. In going to and from the house, he did not seem to be sensible of the absence of his wife, or to recollect that he had one.

About dusk the next evening, he learnt that one of Beckford's best horses was missing. In an instant he was mounted, and was soon out of sight of the city. Yet he could only conjecture Isaac's route. He continued his pursuit till about night-fall, in perfect silence, and with his mind full of undefined thoughts of vengeance.

He was riding along a dangerous, narrow track, near the edge of a precipice, at the foot of which was running a swift tide, when, just as he was turning the corner of a rock, his horse's head suddenly crossed the neck of another horse, held by a man who was walking cautiously by his side. Though it was growing dark, and the man was muffled, Thornton knew him the instant his eye fell upon him ; and springing to the ground, with a shout, stood full before Isaac.

The great coat fell from Isaac's ashy face. He could neither speak nor move.—“Have I you then,” cried Thornton, grappling the trembling wretch by the throat, and lifting him upright off his feet. He gave a keen glance, for an instant, down the precipice, without speaking, and then looked doubtingly.—“No, no,” said he, “I'll not take the dog's life so.—Hold, there, you curse of man,” said he, drawing out his pistols, and handing one to Isaac. Isaac put out his hand to take it, without seeming to be conscious of what was to be done.—“Stand there,” said Thornton, “and make sure your aim, for the last hour of one or both of us has come.”—Isaac's hand trembled so that his pistol fell to the ground.—“Have ready, man, or you're gone,” screamed Thornton, frantic with rage.—Isaac could not move.—“Down, then,” cried Thornton, and the fire of the pistol flared over Isaac's wild eyes and convulsed open jaws. His arms tossed upward in the agony of terror and death, and he fell over into the stream. His horse, rearing with fright, plunged with his master.

Thornton looked down the precipice ; nothing was to be seen or heard but the whirl and rush of the dark tide.—“And can we go so quickly

from life to death! Why then should a man live to misery?"

He turned slowly away. The intense longing for revenge was satisfied, and he was now left feeble as a child. He mounted his horse with difficulty, and journeyed homeward under a hot sun, his brain stunned with horror. At last his mind became slowly more distinct, and with the recollection of what had past, came frightful figures, which fell away, then suddenly rose again, and spread themselves close before him. He pressed his eyeballs till they darted fire, then passed his hand quickly before his face, as if to drive away what he saw, but the terrible sight returned upon him.

The next day he reached the city about dark. As he entered it, the sudden change from the quiet of the country to the noise, the quick and various movements of the crowd, the broken light and shadow, and flare of lamps, increased the confusion of his mind, till it so wandered, that he scarcely knew where he was when he reached his own door.

He leaned forward on his horse for some time, trying to regain his self-possession. At last, looking up at the house, and observing it quite

still and dark, the thought of his wife crossed him, for the first time. He leaped from his horse, and rushing up the steps, rang violently at the door. It was opened cautiously by one he had never seen before ; but such was the confused state of his mind that he paid no regard to the circumstance. Throwing open the door of the sitting room, he found it stripped of all its furniture. He hurried from room to room ; all was bare and deserted. Then came the dreadful truth upon him that he was beggared. The shock nearly unsettled his brain.

He ran towards the street door, scarcely knowing whither he was going, when he was arrested by a couple of men, for debt. He made no resistance, but talking incoherently to himself, suffered them to carry him peaceably to prison. He laid down upon the bed furnished him, and soon fell asleep as quietly as if in his own house, for both body and mind had lost their sensibility through violent effort and fatigue.

The sun had shot into his prison with a red and dusty ray, before he awoke ; and for a long time he could not recollect where he was, or what had past.—“In prison, and for murder, and die on a gallows !”—The turning of the key roused

him a little.—“My brain’s disordered.”—A man handed him a letter, and left the room. He gazed on it some time without minding whose hand it was.—“My God, my mother!” cried he, at last; “and am I to be your murderer too!”

Mrs. Thornton had heard from old Mr. Beckford of the attachment laid upon her son’s property immediately after his leaving the city, and had written in a state of mind that showed she could not much longer endure her sufferings. Mr. Beckford, at her earnest request, had gone to her. His nephew had left town unexpectedly; but the only suspicion was that he had fled with Mrs. Thornton, and that her husband had now returned, after an unsuccessful search. Thornton’s anguish was dreadful. His mother dangerously ill, and made so by him, and yet he not allowed to see her.—“She will die,” said he to himself, “believing that I cared not for her; and yet I dare not let her know why I cannot see her.”

In a day or two came another letter, and from Mr. Beckford, for the mother was too feeble to write. Thornton’s impatience was now almost maddening. At times he raved like a maniac, then suddenly sunk down into a state of torpor,

till the remembrance of his father, his leaving home, the misery he had brought upon himself and his friends, rushed on him. Then would suddenly appear the face of Isaac, as he saw him die, and he would spring up, and stand, as if stiff and frozen with horror.

This was not to endure long. Mr. Beckford wrote a letter to him, stating that his release was procured, and urging him to set off immediately by the conveyance furnished ; for that his mother, unfortunately, had heard of his imprisonment, and that the shock had been a violent one to her, in her weak condition.

Thornton was standing in a state of apparent insensibility, when the keeper entered with the letter. He did not notice that any one was in the room ; but when his eye fell upon it, as it was handed to him, he seized it as a caged lion would his food. He ran his fiery eyes over it, then shook it from his hand as if it had been a snake he held.—“This is not her blood,” muttered he, looking closely at one hand, then at another, as if counting the spots. “No, no, this is Isaac’s, I know it well—my old school-fellow, Isaac’s blood.” He stood a few minutes perfectly still, then pressed his hand to his forehead,

as if trying to recollect himself.—“Where have I been?—Ha! I remember now.”

“My horse, my horse,—is he ready?” he said eagerly, to the servant, who was entering the apartment.

“At the gate, Sir. But you are not ready.”

“True, true!” And he suffered the man to equip him. He looked at himself for a moment, as if not knowing for what purpose he was so dressed. Then, as the thought struck him, he darted out of the prison, and running to the gate, threw himself upon the horse, and dashing the rowels into his sides, was out of sight in a moment.

There was now but one purpose in his mind, and he clung to it with a spasmodic grasp. And the speed with which he rode, and his intense eagerness, nearly fired his brain. His eye was fixed on home—he saw nothing round him—he minded not hill, nor hollow.

The horse’s nostrils closed and dilated fast, and the sweat ran down his hoofs, when Thornton came in sight of the house. Once more he urged him on;—and then he reached the door. He tossed the reins on the neck of the panting beast, and throwing himself off, was in an instant at the

head of the stairs. The chamber door was shut. As he flung it open, he rushed towards the foot of the bed. On it lay, with a white sheet over it and with bandaged jaws, the corpse of his mother. His hands spread, his eyes glared wide, and his very hair stood on end. One shudder passed through his frame as if it would have snapt short every stretched fibre. Tearing with a grasp the hair from his head, he gave a shriek, enough to have awakened the dead, and ran, mad, from the chamber.

Old Mr. Beckford, hearing a noise over-head, stepped to the parlour door, and saw Thornton coming down stairs. He called out. Thornton said not a word, but rushed by him, the hair sticking to his clinched fingers. As he passed, he turned his eyes on the old man—the sockets sent out nothing but flame. The old gentleman followed, trembling, to the door, and looked out, but he was gone. The noise came and went like a thunderclap, and all was still again.

He pushed eagerly on, not regarding whither he was going; and the horse took the same course Thornton did the first time he left home.

At last Thornton struck upon the heath, and rode onward till he came where the way forked.

His recollection returned in a moment. He checked his horse suddenly, and looked over the track he had once passed. His lip quivered, and tears stood in his eyes. "Ages of misery have rolled over me since then," said he, looking forward upon the track till it was lost in the distance.—"To the left, to the left," cried he to his horse, and pressing him on, "for that, I then said, was ill omen, and it suits me now."

After Mr. Beckford had laid the unhappy mother in her grave, and had sent in all directions to gain some information concerning her son, he went to the city to make inquiries about his nephew.

The horse was washed up near the precipice, but Isaac's body was never found. It was supposed that the animal had taken fright, and had fallen with his rider into the stream.

Mrs. Thornton was soon heard of as appearing the dashing mistress of a young man in a distant city. Her extravagance and violent temper caused frequent changes in this sort of connexion, and she soon sank down into the lowest class of females of her order, and died as they die.

As no account of Thornton could be gained, it was conjectured either that he had destroyed

himself, or had wandered away a maniac. It was autumn when he disappeared; the winter had set in stormy and cold, and some supposed he might have perished.

In the early part of the day, towards the close of spring, as the widow Wentworth was taking care of a brood of chickens just hatched, a man, in a fisher's garb, drove up to her door. He was seated in a light horse-cart, old and shattered, and drawn by a small, lean horse. He inquired whether she could inform him where lived a woman of the name of Wentworth.

"It's for me you are looking, I suppose, good man. What's your will?"

"I would ask you to give me a morsel," said he, getting down from his cart, "before I tell my errand; for I've rode ever since day break, and it has been but a chilly morning."

After finishing his meal, he began as follows.—
"There was a strange young man made his appearance in our parts last autumn; and he has been thereabouts up to this time. It's clear that he's not altogether right here," said the man, pointing to his head; "but then he would harm nobody, and kept wandering about all alone; and so we never troubled him."

“ Well, what of him?” said the old woman eagerly ;—for she immediately conjectured who it might be.

“ I fear he’s dying,” said the man. “ He was not seen all along shore for many days ; and some of us went to his hut ; and there he was lying, looking like one of the dead. But he was sensible enough then, and begged that we would find a widow of the name of Wentworth, (who I thought from his account must live hereabouts,) and bring her to him before he died ; ‘ for,’ said he, ‘ she is the only one of all the living that has any love for me.’ ”

“ And did he tell his name ?”

“ No,” said the man. “ We asked him, but he said it was no matter, and that you would remember him to whom you told your story, and talked so holily when the sun was going down. ‘ She’ll not have forgotten it,’ said he, (so mournfully that I could have cried,) ‘ as I did, when I most needed it.’ ”

“ And think you he’s living ?” said the old woman.—It matters not,” she said to herself. “ I saw the tear glisten in his eye, when I told him of Sally, and I talked with him by her grave ; and I’ll lay him in the ground too, when he dies.—

Which way, and how far is it to the place, good man?"

"A dozen miles, or so, due east, as I guess."

"How am I to get there, and back?" asked she.

"Even with me," he answered, "for this is the only coach in all our neck of land, and this the only steed, ragged as he looks, except the poor young man's, and he's in no better condition now."

The old woman having found a friend to take charge of her house, began her journey.

"We were all out a fishing, except the old woman," said the man, as they rode along. When we got back, she told us that a young man, a gentleman, and well dressed, had been to the hut two or three times for food, and that he always took it away with him. She would not receive his money, for he appeared not to be in his right mind. But he never failed leaving some on the table. Whether or not he knew of our return, I can't say; but we saw nothing of him, till one day, passing the old hut which we had left for a better, we spied him sitting at the door, and his horse feeding on the coarse grass near it. As soon as he discovered us, he went in, and he ever shunned us. We've seen him looking for

shellfish among the rocks, and carrying home wreck-wood for firing. How he kept himself warm through winter, I cannot tell. But for aught we could find, dried seaweed must have been his bedding. We have sometimes left food in his hut when he was out ; and his horse used now and then to share the scant fare of this pony here ; for I could not but pity him, though a beast, when the sleet drove sharp against him."

A heavy sea-fog was now coming in. In a few minutes the sun was hid, and the damp stood on the nag's long, shaggy coat like rain-drops. They soon heard the low growl of the sea ; and turning a high point of land, they saw near them multitudes of breakers, foaming and roaring, and flinging themselves ashore, like sea-monsters chasing their prey.

They were descending slowly through heavy sand to the beach, when they heard two persons calling to each other in a sharp, high key. The voices sounded as at a great distance ; but in a moment, they saw just ahead of them, and coming towards them, out of the spray and mist, a man, in a sailor's jacket, and a woman in one of the same, with a man's hat fastened under her chin by a red handkerchief. A startling, myste-

rious feeling passed over the old woman, as if those she saw were something more than human, and were given another nature to be dwellers in the sea.

“Is there life in him?” cried her guide, as they passed.—“Scant alive,” called out the woman. The old widow looked back. They were passing into the mist, and were instantly lost sight of.

The fog began to break away, and the sea and sand flashed upon them with a blinding brightness. They dragged on a mile or two further, when the sky became gloomy, and the wind began to rise.

“And is all as desolate as this?” asked the old woman, looking over a thousand shapeless sand hills, which stretched away one behind another, without end, and seeming as if heaved up and washed by the sea, then left bare to sight.

“There is little that’s better,” answered the man.

“And have you no other growth than this yellow, reedy grass, that spears up so scantily out of these sand-hills?”

“It’s not so ill a sight to us, neither, who have nothing greener,” answered the man, a

little hurt. "And there's a bright red berry that looks gay enough amongst it.—But peace," said he, "for here's the dwelling of the dying man."

The building was of rough boards, some of which hung loose and creaking in the wind. It was turned almost black, except on the side towards the sea, which shone with a grayish crust; and a corner of the decayed chimney was seen just above the roof. On the ridge of one of the sand-hills by the house, stood, with his drooping head from them, the starved, sharp-boned horse, the sand whirling round him like drifting snow.—"Poor fellow," said the man, "when I first saw him, he was full of metal, and snuffed the air and looked with pricked ears and wild eye out upon the sea, as if he would bound over it."

The old woman opened the door cautiously. A gray-headed man was sitting by a sort of crib of rough boards, in which lay Thomas Thornton, his eyes closed, his cheek hollow and pale, and his mouth relaxed and open.

"Is this he," said she, talking to herself as she looked upon him, "with the burning eye and hot cheek and firm set mouth, of fiery and untamed passions? I did not look to see you come to

such an end, much as I feared for you.—May your sufferings here be an atonement for your sins.—All was not evil in you. Many have died happier than you, who had less of good in them ; and have left a better name behind them than you will leave.”—A tear dropped from her eyes on his forehead. He opened his sleepily upon her. The colour came to his cheek ; he lifted his hand to hers with a weak motion, and looked towards the old man.—“ Leave us alone a little while,” said the widow.

He spoke. “ I have been a sinful man,” he said in a faint, broken voice. He paused, and his look became wild.—“ My father,—and Isaac, Isaac—he fell—and my mother—did I kill them all ?” His eye appeared to fasten on an object in the distance. He then closed his lids hard, as if trying to shut out something frightful.

“ What looked you at ?” asked the widow.

“ O, you could not see her. She is seen of none but me. I’ve looked upon the sight a thousand times. I’ve seen her shrouded body rising and falling with the waves, stretched out, as it was on her death-bed ; and it bent not, and it floated nearer and nearer to me till I could look no longer.—And there, too, has she stood

for hours, on that small, white rock yonder that rises out of the sea," said he, trying eagerly to raise himself, and look out towards it. "Yes, there has she stood beckoning me, when the sun beat upon it; and I was made to look on it till its glare turned all around me black. I've tried to rush into the sea to her, though the waves ran so heavy between us; but I was held back till the sweat streamed down my body, and I fell on the sand."—He gasped for breath, and lay panting. At last he recovered a little; and opening his eyes, looked slowly about him. His lips moved. The old woman bent over him, and heard him breathe out, "God forgive my sins."

"God will forgive the repentant, however wicked they have been," said the widow. He gave a look of hope.—"I've asked it of Him day and night, when I had my mind; I've prayed to Him, stretched on the bare, cold rocks, and when I dared not look up. Will not you pray for me? Will none of the good pray for me?"

She knelt down by him, with her hands clasped, and looking upward. There was an agony of soul for a moment—she could not

speak. The tears rolled down her wrinkled cheeks, and then she prayed aloud. And from the shore went up a prayer fervent and holy as ever ascended from the house of God. And the dying man prayed with her in the spirit. She ended, and laying her hand on his forehead, said in a solemn voice, "my son, I trust there is mercy for you with God."

He looked upward and tried to clasp his hands. It was his last effort, and he sank away with a countenance as placid, as if falling into a gentle sleep.

The old widow stood for a few minutes gazing on the lifeless body. At last she said to herself, without turning away,—“he must not lie here, as an out-cast ; for the sands will drive over him, and there will be no mark where he rests. I will take him with me, and lay him by the stream near my home. And when I die, I shall be gathered with him and with my child to the grave.”

THE

IDLE MAN.

No. I.—VOL. II.

How various his employments, whom the world
Calls idle. *Cowper.*

NEW-YORK:

WILEY & HALSTED, No. 3, WALL-STREET.

1822.

Southern District of New-York, ss.

BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the eighteenth day of May, in the forty-fifth year of the independence of the United States of America, WILEY & HALSTED, of the said district, have deposited in this office the title of a book, the right whereof they claim as proprietors, in the words following, *to wit* :

The Idle Man.

How various his employments, whom the world

Calls idle.

Conoper.

In conformity to the act of the congress of the United States, entitled, "An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned;" and also to an act, entitled, "An act, supplementary to an act, entitled, an act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned, and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching historical and other prints."

G. L. TOMPSON,

Clerk of the Southern District of New-York.

PAUL FELTON.

— From his intellect,
And from the stillness of abstracted thought
He asked repose.
And fears, and fancies, thick upon me came ;
Dim sadness, and blind thoughts I knew not nor could name.

Who thinks, and feels
And recognises ever and anon
The breeze of Nature stirring in his soul,
Why need such man go desperately astray,
And nurse "the dreadful appetite of death?"
Wordsworth.

Do not torment me !
Pray, and beware the foul fiend.
Shakespeare.

PAUL FELTON was the son of a well educated country gentleman of moderate fortune, who, having lost his wife early in life, took upon himself the education of his son and daughter, from an unwillingness to be deprived of their society, and as a relief in his melancholy hours.

The retired life which the father led prevented the son's having many acquaintances, and checked those open, communicative feelings which make schoolboys so pleasing. The serious and reserved manners which the father

had fallen into, rather from his loss than any thing native in his disposition, made an early impression on the son ; and from childhood Paul was retired, silent and thoughtful. His character was of a strong cast ; and not being left to its free play amongst his equals, it worked with a violence increased by its pent up and secret action.

The people of the neighbourhood were illiterate and uncouth, for the most part having that rough and bold bearing which comes from an union of ignorance and independence. Paul's distant manner appeared to them like an assumption of superiority ; and on all occasions which offered, they were careful to show their dislike of it. This not only increased his reserve, but gave to his mind a habit of looking on strangers as in some sort enemies ; and when passing any one who was not a familiar, he felt as if there were something like mutual hostility between them. With all this he had good affections ; and when looking out from his solitude upon the easy and mingling cheerfulness of some, and the strong attachments which here and there bound others fast together, he saw how beautiful was that which was companionable and kind in the

heart of man, and his eye rested on it, and his soul longed after it.

So evil, however, is the nature of men, that almost the love of what is excellent may lead to sin if we do not take heed to the way in which we seek it; and we may see, and understand, and wish for it, till we come to envy it in another:— We may gaze upon a character that is fair and elevated and happy, till we feel its very goodness stirring in us dislike. Paul had no settled ill will towards any one; though, perhaps, there was mingled with his repining somewhat of envy at the happiness and ease of mind in others.

As he advanced in life his passions waxed stronger, and he craved an object about which they might live and grow. His retired habits, however, had left him without any of that careless confidence which helps along in so wonderful a manner men of the world; and with a perfect consciousness of his own powers, he was distrustful of his ability to make them known, and of the estimate which others would put upon them. This same uneasy distrust ran into all his feelings; and with a character to love earnestly and tenderly, the fear that his personal appearance and somewhat awkward manners

deprived him of the power of showing what his heart was susceptible of, made him almost miserable with the thought that such feelings were ever given to him. "When I am tired of solitude," he would say, "and my heart aches with the void I feel, shall all that I am conscious of within me as beautiful and true, be made scoff of by another, because I have not the fair form and manner of other men, and my tongue cannot so well tell what is within me? Shall all that is sincere in me be questioned or looked on with indifference?" So far had even his good affections become a torment to him, that all was at war and in opposition in his character. At one time he was busy in scornful speculation and doubt upon his passions,—and at another, he would urge them on, and give them rein that he might feel all the self torture they would bring. No one thing was left to its natural play—as making a part of his daily life—but existed in excess, or not at all. This change and opposition broke up that settled state in which the sense of truth puts us, and left him restless and disturbed, till at last his mind seemed given for little else, but to speculate upon his feelings,—part or unite them, quell them, or inflame them

nigh to madness. He who so far questions his own nature will question all things, and will bring the most pain and misery on those who are dearest to him because he is for ever asking for an assurance of returned affections, and seeking it in the power he feels himself to have over the object he loves. He inflicts his tortures and still doubts ; and goes on to the end, working his own misery, and seeing the object of which he is most fond, perishing like himself.

Paul was nearly alone in the world. His father was for the most part lost in his own thoughts. His sister, though lively and talkative, had neither deep feeling, nor much strength of intellect. So much action and sound to little purpose wore on Paul's spirit, and though he was not without affection for her, a sneer would sometimes escape him in his impatience. He would shut himself up in his chamber, or wander off where no human being was to be met with, without so much as a dog for a companion.

He had now lived many years a self-tormentor, and without communion with any one to relieve his mind, when Esther Waring, the daughter of his father's friend, came on a visit to Paul's sister. Her disposition was cheerful and social,

and she had a thoughtful, active mind, which drew and fixed the attention of those she talked with. Her feelings were quick and kind, and the tenor of her thinking and remarks showed that they were deep. Her black hair fell round her dark, quiet eye, which seemed to rest on what the mind was showing it; and when she spoke, a light shone through it from the very recesses of the soul, as the stars shoot up from the depths of the waters, brightening what they shine through. Her form was beautifully moulded, and her movements gave it that pliability and delicacy which so touch and interest men of grave or melancholy natures.

Paul would often ramble among the hills, dwelling upon his own thoughts, and seeking for sympathy in nature; but she did not always answer him; and then it was that he stood like a withered thing amidst her fresh and living beauty. Sometimes he would sit alone on the top of one of the chains of these neighbouring hills, and look out on the country beneath him, as if imploring to be taken to a share of the joy which it seemed sensible to as it lay in the sunshine. He would call in the spirit to the birds that past over him, and to the stream that wound away till

lost in the common brightness of the day, to stay and comfort him. They heard him not, but left him to cares, and the waste of time, and his own thoughts.

It was after one of these melancholy days that he returned home about dusk, and not having heard of the arrival of a stranger, entered the parlour with a gloomy countenance, his eyes cast down, his full black eyebrows bent together, and his lips moving as if he were lost in talk with himself. Without observing that there was any one in the room, he walked directly to the window, and stood looking out on the evening sky. His powerful face and the characteristic movement of his body attracted the attention of Esther ; and her eyes fixed on him unconsciously as he stood partly turned from her. He was below the common height, with a person square, muscular, and somewhat heavy ; but he had the air and bearing of one of a deep, resolute and thoughtful mind—as being one of those men, whom, if a woman loves at all, she loves with the devotion of a martyr.

“ Paul,” said his father.—“ Sir,” answered Paul without turning his head.—“ Here is my old friend’s daughter, Miss Waring.”—Little

used to society, and watchful lest others should mark his defects, his manner, when in company, was at all times somewhat embarrassed. He turned, and saw the fair face of Esther. It was slightly flushed, and the light which filled her eye and played over her countenance broke upon the gloomy face of Paul, and touched the sluggish spirit within him with a sensation of warmth and life. He made such apology for his inattention as his sudden introduction would allow of. His manner was constrained, and a little awkward. It was, however, the constraint of a certain sensitiveness which gives more interest and delight than that sort of acquired, conventional ease and grace so common in the world.

A country tea-table is a social affair ; and Paul lost for once a little of his taciturnity. The presence of an agreeable stranger is a great restorer of the spirits to those who are little in the world ; and the mixture of playful and serious in Esther's conversation, and the freshness which we feel coming from a new mind, kept Paul till a late hour in the parlour. His next day's walk was a little shortened, and the regular tread of his step as he paced his chamber was

not heard so long, and was often broken. It was evident that the settled gloom of the mind was from day to day breaking up, and that new thoughts and objects were coming in ; and that which had bound the soul like ice was melting and loosening and going off. He continued his walks more from habit than to relieve the intenseness of his thoughts, and his path lay less over the heath and sand than usual, and more amongst the grass, and trees, and flowers ; his sense of the beautiful was becoming more wakeful and softening the sternness of his nature.

The change went on so gradually and secretly, that it was a long time before he was conscious any was taking place. After breakfast he loitered in the parlour, and his evening passed quietly away in mild conversation with Esther. The beautiful blending of the thoughtful and gay in her manner and remarks played on him like sun and shade beneath a tree ; and tranquillizing and gentle emotions were stealing into him unawares.

Nor was it he alone whose heart was touched. Paul was not a man whom a woman could be long with and remain indifferent to. The strength of passion and intellect so distinctly marked in his features, in the movements of the

face, and in every gesture—the deep, but rich, mellow tone of his voice, with a certain mysterious seriousness over the whole, excited a restless curiosity to get more into his character;—and a woman, who is at the trouble of prying into the constitution of a man's heart and mind, is in great danger of falling in love with him for her pains. Esther did not make this reflection when she began; and so taken up was she in the pursuit, that she never once thought what it might end in, nor of turning back.

Paul was differently educated from the run of men; his father disliked the modern system, and so Paul's mind was no encyclopedia, nor book of general reference. He read not a great deal, but with great care; and his reading lay back amongst original thinkers, and those who were almost supernaturally versed in the mysteries of the heart of man. Their clear and direct manner of uttering their thoughts had given a distinctness to all his opinions, and a plain way of expressing them; and all he had to say savoured of reflection and individuality. He was a man precisely calculated to interest a woman of feeling and good sense, who had grown tired of the elegant and indefinite.

He never thought of the material world as formed on purpose to be put into a crucible ; nor did he analyse it and talk upon it, as if he knew quite as much about it as He who made it. To him it was a grand and beautiful mystery—in his better moments, a holy one. It was power, and intellect, and love, made visible, calling out all the sympathies of his being, and causing him to feel the living Presence throughout the whole. Material became intellectual beauty with him ; he was as a part of the great universe, and all he looked or thought on was in some way connected with his own mind and heart. The conversation of such a man (begin where it might) always tending homeward to the bosom, was not likely to pass from a woman like Esther without leaving some thoughts which would be dear to her, to mingle with her own, and raising emotions which she would love to cherish.

Two minds of a musing cast will have some valued feelings and sentiments, which will soon make an intergrowth and become bound together. Where this happens in reserved minds, it goes on so secretly, and spreads so widely before it is found out, that when at last

one thought or passion is touched by some little circumstance, or word, or look, a sympathizing feeling runs through the whole; and they who had not before known or intimated that they loved, find themselves in full and familiar union, with one heart and one being.

Esther's visit had now continued so long, that she was sensible it was proper for her to return home unless urged to remain; but it so happened that she never thought of going, without at the same time thinking of Paul, and with that came a procrastinating, lingering spirit. There was always something happening which was reason enough for her putting off the mention of the affair. She argued the matter, and said to herself, Paul did not cause the delay; but her heart beat quicker, and she felt that she was trying to deceive herself.—“I will know whether he cares for me,” said she. “There is something strangely inscrutable in him. I must, I will see into that sealed up heart.”—The hour came; but, in spite of her efforts, her voice was tremulous when she spoke of leaving the family. Paul was sitting opposite her at the table. His heart sunk at the words. He looked up, and his eyes met hers. The colour came to his cheek :

She blushed, and her eyes fell beneath his. Mr. Felton and his daughter protested against her going.—“I hope,” said Paul at last.—She looked up at him once more. He coloured deeper than before, and was silent. It stung him to the quick that any one should see the struggle of his feelings ; and he left the room.

As he traversed his chamber, his step grew quicker and quicker, and instead of gaining composure, his mind was more and more agitated. He became too impatient to bear it any longer, and was hurrying out to find relief in the open air, when he met Esther in the entry. Ashamed to let Paul see her emotion, she was passing him with her face turned from him.—“The show of concern,” said Paul, without calling her by name—Esther stopped—“the show of concern for us in some may seem impertinent, and offend us more than their indifference or dislike. If I was too obtrusive just now, let me hope for your forgiveness.”

“Mr. Felton officious ! And can he think me so frivolous or vain a girl as not to feel any token of regard from him a cause for self-esteem.”

“I did not humble myself to extort praise, Miss Waring ; it is enough if I have not offended.”

"Neither did I mean it as such," replied Esther. "I was not so weak as to think your self-approval needed my good opinion to support it."

"Do not misunderstand me," replied Paul. "I spoke in true humility, and not in pride. Not to have offended you was all I dared look for."

"Has it ever seemed to you that any of your many notices were other than grateful to me? If so, my manner but poorly expresses what I feel. Go where I may, Mr. Felton, I shall remember how much my mind owes you—how much the thoughts you have given it have done for my heart. And I hope it is not in my disposition to be thankless for any good I may receive."

"Had I a claim," answered Paul, "it is not your gratitude I'd ask for. The heart that longs for sympathy and finds it not, what else can touch it?—Forgive me, I know not what I say. —To be remembered in kindness by you, Esther, shall be a drop to comfort this thirsty soul."

"And can a soul large as yours, and filled with all things to delight another's mind, seem desolate to you?"

“Is it enough, think you, Esther, to be gazed upon? Or can the imagination satisfy the cravings here, at the heart?”

“The heart that does crave fellowship strongly, may surely find it, Paul, if we do not perversely, and for our self-torture, shut it up.”

“Yes, but it is not every passer-by that I would go with. O, she must be one so excellent, so much above me! And yet I would not take her, did she come to me in mercy only. It drives me mad to think on’t. For me there is no fellow.—Alone, alone, I must go alone through the wide and populous earth,” he cried, leaving her suddenly.

As he went along, his eye past swiftly from one object to another, seeking something to rest upon, which might fix his hurrying and disordered thoughts. So fully had the notion possessed him that he was doomed to live without sympathy in the world, that the power was denied him to reveal to another what was in his heart, that his person, his manner, and all which made the outward man, barred him from any return of love, that the interest he discovered Esther to show in him, while it came like an unlooked for joy, brought with it doubt, humil-

iation and pain. He thought what he must seem to be to another, and then distrusted the plainness and steadiness of her nature.—“There is not enough within them,” said he, “for their minds to dwell upon ; there must be something outward and near to entertain their thoughts ; and their fickleness makes them careless how poor it is, so it will do for the time. She will go back to the world, and, amongst showy and accomplished men, will laugh secretly at herself, that such an one as I am ever quickened one beat of her heart.—Yet it may not be so ; souls may hold communion hidden and mysterious as their nature. Can looks and movements and voice like hers, all blending in harmony, speak any thing but truth ? Would that her heart lay open like a book to me, that I might read it and be satisfied !”

He had walked on through brake and over crumbling moss, and was climbing up the shadowy side of a steep hill, when, reaching its brow, the whole sweep of the western sky opened upon him in full splendor, and he seemed in an instant standing on the verge of a new world, a world of light and glory. As he looked forward, all that lay between him and it sunk

away, he felt himself expanding through the air, and becoming, as it were, one of the sons of light. But the spirit that lifted him up for a moment, passed like a bright cloud from him, a weight was on his soul heavier than the earth with all its hills, and reality breathed on him like the air of death. As he stood on the bare hill alone, and saw all beneath him making a fair society, the trees in brotherhood :—" Must I only," he cried, " of all the works of God, be an outcast ?"—He looked again upon the sky ; but the quiet clouds seemed to him to be telling of joy and peace to each other. His lip quivered as he leaned with folded arms, gazing on the setting sun. " The whole earth mourns thy going, thou gladdener of all things ; thy light is poured out over it ; thou touchest the trees and the grass and the rocks, and they each answer thee ; thou fillest the air, and sounds are heard in it as if coming forth from thy very light ; and all mingle in thee as in one common spirit of cheerfulness and love."—The sun was now gone. He set himself down upon a stone, till the visionary twilight and shadows were lost in the common darkness. There was the same vagueness of purpose in his mind as when he left home, yet

there was less tumult of the passions, and gentler feelings had entered him. As he turned to go homeward, the few stars that were coming out in the east cheered his spirit, hope gushed out in his heart like returning life, the affections were all in motion, and, for a while, the sense that he was in fellowship with his kind thrilled through him with rapture.

Esther was at the door when Paul returned.—
“What, alone?” asked he.

“Yes, you have all deserted me.”

“And can you feel deserted, Esther, who have the company of happy thoughts?”

“All thoughts that we cannot share, in time turn to sadness.”

“They do indeed, or to something worse than sadness—to discontent—almost to hate sometimes.”

“That is a fearful sin, in the solitude of our souls to grow in evil.”

“It makes us mad almost,” said he, his eyes shooting a wild light on her. His look and voice made her tremble.—“Paul, Paul,” said she vehemently, “what ails ye? Can a heart like yours find no sympathy in all this world? Is there no one being to share in all its goodness with you, and give it ease?”

“And with whom shall it find rest,” he asked, looking earnestly at her.—Her eagerness had carried her too far; she blushed deeply, and stood silent before him.—The struggle with himself was a severe one; he had never laid open one deep feeling, and how could he make known that of love? At last he said, after a pause, “though of form and manners unwinning, and reserved, and seemingly cold and hard, I have at times been foolish enough to think that there was one being who could read something of my soul, and love me for what she found there. Tell me, Esther, was I mistaken, did I presume too far?”

“And do you ask me so doubtingly,” said she, much moved, but looking up frankly at him, “to reprove me for speaking as I did in the warmth of my feelings? You cannot think,” she added, somewhat cast down, “that it was an artifice in me to hasten you to this. I did not consider that it was a freedom which ill suited me, and it came from an earnest heart, Paul.”

“My words were not those of reproof. O, Esther, it was said in the lowliness of a soul, which, though too often restless and proud, is at times humble as a worm. It is a trial of my

faith in you to believe that you could ever love me with all your heart; the world could hardly have persuaded me once, that a creature like you, made almost to be worshipped of men, could ever look in fondness on one like me.”—He paused for a moment; then his manner changed suddenly. “But, but,” he cried, hurried and vehemently, “so much as I doubt my powers to touch another’s heart, so much the more, so much the more must I have assurance of her love.”

“Why so wild, Paul? What pledge can I give you, that I would not?”

“Ay, ay, but the pledge must not only be a sure one,” said he, his manner growing still more vehement,—“it must be of a love which shall make me all in all. Can you,” he cried, seizing her hand and wringing it hard, “have me in all your thoughts—make your whole soul mine?”—She shook, and turned pale. She struggled to pass it off lightly; but a tear was in her eye, as she said, with a forced smile—“Why, Paul, you are beside yourself! Any body might think I was making myself over to the Evil One, and not to the man that loves me.”

"Forgive me, forgive me, Esther," he murmured in a choaked voice, throwing his arms round her neck and resting his hot brow on her shoulder,—“I—I feel myself sometimes too poor a thing for mortal regard; and then, and then I could crawl into the earth. O, take me to you, and cherish me, and tell me that I am not wholly worthless—that you will love me.”

“Paul, Paul,” said she, scarce articulately, “this is madness. You have brooded all alone over your melancholy thoughts, till they have bewildered you. If you care for me, shall I not make you happy? Look up, and let a cheerful spirit enter you.”—He lifted his head slowly from her shoulder, and stood gazing on her beautiful, tremulous countenance.—“O, you are an angel come in mercy to me. My spirit will never suffer so more.”

“This is too eager, Paul,” said she, kindly. “Let your soul have rest, and try to be of a calmer mind.”—And he was quiet. The heave and tossing of the feelings settled away, and he stood with thoughts as gentle as the moonlight which poured over them, as it came up in the east;—for what spirit will not a woman’s kindness calm?

At last Esther's father came to take her home. Paul was urged to join them; but a certain delicacy prevented his going for the first time to the house in company with the woman to whom he had been but a little while engaged; and so, with an embarrassed and half uttered apology, he said he should soon follow them.

He had time for only a word or two at her leaving him; and yet he looked and spoke as if it would take ages to pour out what was in his soul. All the good affections in our nature seemed at work there—it was love, and pity, and parental care, and the heart-sickness of parting. As he put his arm gently round her, and looked in her face, there was in his manner more of the father, who is about parting with an only daughter for the first time, than of the lover. His voice was low, and thrilling, and admonitory.—“You are going from me, Esther, for the first time since we met. A single and near object moves our affections strangely. In a little while you will be amongst those with whom you grew up; and old sympathies of thought and feeling may return to you. Look carefully into your heart, Esther, and think it your best faith to me, to abide by what that tells you.”

"And can you regard and love me, Paul," she said, turning her eyes upward to his with a prayerful look, "and judge me of so light and changeable a heart?"

"No, Esther, but the very intenseness of love calls up misgivings; and better I were left out on the bleak heath yonder, than be gathered to your bosom; to be thrown away again."

They parted; and though Esther loved him with a devoted spirit, she breathed more freely when out of his presence. He was dearer to her for his melancholy; and his kind and fond manner, when his abstraction of mind was gone, touched her heart. Yet there was something fearful and ominous to her in his gloom; and though she knew it had been caused by long solitude, and a mistaken estimate of the relation in which he might stand to others, still it was mysteriously foreboding to her, and there was an indistinct impression on the mind that some dreadful event, connected with it, awaited her.

He followed with his eyes the daintily moving steeds and gay chariot, till a turn in the road shut them out from his sight.—"They belong to what we call the elegancies of life," said he to himself. "There is much going under that

term which serves to break up the thoughtfulness of the mind, and what is native and sincere in the heart.”—He turned away, not only melancholy, but dissatisfied and doubting. And now that he was alone again, and without the kind persuasions of Esther, his old depression and gloom were returning, and with them all the torture that doubting minds undergo in love. Sometimes he saw her before him with the distinctness almost of real presence ; her voice and countenance beautifully touched with her fondness for him ; and then again he remembered her cheerful, social spirit, and he was driven from her thoughts by those who were strangers to him. And a thousand times a day he would ask himself, “is she thinking of me now, or is she busy amidst the millions of things which waste our time and draw to them our wishes and hopes, yet have nothing abiding in them like the nature of our souls ?”

These conjectures and sad reflections were now to give way to feelings immediate, active and intense ; for Paul set off from home and soon reached Mr. Waring’s.

Unless a man has met, after a long or distant separation, the woman who loves him with all her

heart, he never saw the soul shine out in the countenance in all its glow and beauty. So thought Paul when they met. And as Esther looked on him, his face, too, was changed like the edge of a cloud by the shining of the sun upon it: And she felt that no joy is like her joy who reads such silent tokens of love returned, heart answering to heart, and thanks for the deep gladness she has given.

The house of Esther's father, whither Paul had come, was situated but a few miles from the city, in a pleasant village, made up chiefly of people of wealth and fashion. Though Mr. Waring's fortune was not as large as many of his neighbours', as he had no child but Esther he was able to gratify his fondness for company and gay life, and had made them agreeable to her from early habit. She loved society the better, also, because she made it pleasant, and not for the reason that those do who are as dull company to others as to themselves.

The consequence of all this was, that Paul and she had fewer hours together, than when at his father's. He was shy of being near her in company, and to talk with the woman to whom he was known to be engaged, before strangers,

would have been martyrdom to him. He found that her countenance brightened and spirits rose high in society. Her gay laugh and cheerful voice was like the hissing of an adder in his ear. He was pained and made uneasy, because he saw her taken up with that in which he felt himself unfitted to hold a part. She was giving delight and receiving it in return, and he could not share in it. He would stand aside and watch her, till he fancied that her look and tone of voice were the same with which she looked on and talked with him.

His mind was in a peculiar degree single. Whatever passion or thought was in him, it filled him entirely ; and now that it was love, all in the world that held not connexion with that was as nothing to him ; he neither heard, nor saw, nor felt any thing that concerned not his love for Esther. The alacrity with which she entered into whatever was going on, was to him a want of steadiness of mind and depth of feeling. He understood nothing of those to whom the passion of love gives a gay spirit—a feeling of kindness and fellowship towards all the world—from whom, as it grows fuller and more intense, it sends forth something of its

bright influences over all things :—In him it was a self-absorbing and lonely fire, flaring only through the recesses of his own soul, and shining alone upon his own solitary thoughts.

“And has God given them another constitution of mind also?” said he to himself one night, as he left the room, too restless to stay any longer. “Have they no fastnesses nor places of rest to come home to? Day and night are they on the wing and never tire. The bird that passed over me just now, and called to me out of the darkness, though he make himself companion of the stars the night long, will go to his nest by morning.—I would not be a thing to lay my heart open to the common eye. Its beatings warm me the more, to think that I can be in the midst of men, and they not count its pulses. Rather than lie out forever sunning in the day, I would be covered up in my grave.”—Paul could not accuse Esther to himself, without a feeling of compunction. This did not drive away his doubts, but made him turn some of the impatience he felt, upon her. Yet in the midst of it, the truth of her character would appear to him in all its fair simplicity, and his adoring spirit would look up to her as something set apart and sacred.

Her spirits were in full flow when Paul left the room ; for it gave animation and cheerfulness to her in all she did, when she thought he saw her. The conversation began to flag ; she turned to look for him, but he was gone. She remembered that a feeling like depression had been gradually gaining on her, and a superstitious thought crossed her, that she had been mysteriously conscious of missing something, she knew not what, though she did not before perceive he had gone. She grew silent, the company withdrew, the family retired to rest, and she was left alone.

It was midnight, and Paul had not returned. There was no sound in the house. She raised the window and looked out. It was a black, misty night, and there was that intense stillness abroad, which, at such a time, is felt by us as a supernatural presence, and makes us think of death. She scarcely breathed as she listened for his footstep, and the beatings of her heart struck upon her ear like a distant bell. At last she heard him as he came round the house, and the blood bounded through her frame.—“ Paul ! ” she cried, and her silver voice rang in the still air. Paul entered,—“ Where have you been, you

runaway," said she, springing lightly towards him,—“to give me the heartach for two long hours,—and all in the chilly night fog, too. See,” said she, running her fingers playfully through his coarse, glossy, black hair, on which the dampness stood in drops—“these pearls shall all be mine, and make me a happy girl again.”

“They will not be the first that have eased a woman’s heart, Esther. Come, come, these are no brown curls to ring the white fingers of a fair hand.”

“I thought to cheer you,” said she, drawing back, “I am sorry it offends you.”

“Did I speak harshly, Esther? If I did, it was far from what I feel.”

“Not harshly, but mournfully, and as if I had given you cause; and to think so is harder to bear, than what comes from an over hasty temper.”

“I am glad to hear you say so, for that is one of the many tokens whereby we find out love.”

“And are you in search of mine still? I had thought it had been yours long ago.”

“And I think so too, Esther; but then it can rest only on our belief, and upon that there will always be hanging some ugly shred of doubt.”

"O! I had thought it was a faith," said she, "not to speak profanely—a faith that surpasseth knowledge, that it was in us as our consciousness, our very life. Is it folly in me to think so?"

"No, Esther, it is your virtue. Bad as I am, I have moments of much blessedness—and this, this is one of them;—it is on me now," he cried in a broken laugh. She started from him as from a deranged man.—"Be not alarmed," said he, seizing her arm, and looking on her eagerly, but with a melancholy smile, "I am not mad, not quite mad, though joy shoots through me sometimes like fire."

"I wish it might burn in you gently and constantly, Paul, for then I should see you a happy man; and I would die to night and give over all my love for you—if love must die with us—could I but leave you happy." She covered her face, and sobbed as if all comfort had forsaken her.

"O, Esther, I am not worthy this; I'm so poor a thing I ought not to make you unhappy even.—That was an evil time in which you saw me first. When I was alone, I went about the earth as a doomed thing; and now that I am connected with my kind, the curse that

was on me singly, seems to be stretching out over all in communion with me. When I see you happy, my heart aches for you, to think how heedless you are of the hour that is waiting you."

"And what hour have I to fear, Paul, but the hour of death which is to part us?"

"I cannot tell; only I have lived impressed from the time I was a boy, that it was writ I should be miserable. And when I see you happy, you look to me like a star trailing your glory across my gloom only to fall and go out in it. Better, I fear, that I should have lived on in darkness, than that your light should ever have shone on me. O, I talk! No more of this now. The morning will overtake us. You look pale and heart-sunken. Let me not make your hour of rest miserable, Esther. Think this, as I hope it is, but the boding of midnight. To-morrow I'll be as cheerful as the lightest of them. Sweet sleep comfort you. And now, my love, good night."—Esther looked at him, melancholy, yet something cheered, but she could not speak as they parted.

For several days, Paul's affectionate manner was not broken by any sudden starts or gloomy reserve; and if after a time these returned upon

“That Esther should ever look on me, and after, love me. And yet you will vow it to-morrow, will you not?”

“If you question it so, it may be better for us both that I should not. For when I have done it, should Paul doubt, he had better be in his grave than live.”

“Nor should I deserve to see the light, nor feel this blessed sun upon me. I was moody, Esther. Do not lay to heart what I say at such times. My joy was too much for me, and made me play with misery. Did’st never in grief have a wild and horrid mirth fork by you like lightning? I have, that my eyes have been blenched at it. I shall be used to this joy soon, and then my spirit will be as quiet before you as that cloud which rests above us in the light. O, you shall be my sun and all else that is good and cheering to me; and when I hold you to me so, to-morrow, I’ll not call you Esther, but my wife.”

The next day they were married, and Paul took Esther to their new home, not quite a mile from the village. The building was plain and well proportioned; set down in the middle of a level grass plat, which was broken only by the

gravel way winding up to the door, and a clump of young trees a little on one side. The whole was open to the sun ; and about it was an air of perfect simplicity and quiet. All along the even road to the village lay a beautiful prospect ; and there was a row of elms and sycamores, stretching the whole length of the route. So that, though they had but one near neighbour, Mr. Ridgley, they had quite as much company as if in the midst of the village.

Their house terminated these pleasant views ; for a little back of it ran a ridge of steep rocks ; and beyond that the country was desolate, stretching out into wide sand tracts, broken by patches of scant, short, yellowish grass, and half round the whole, swept a forest of low, ragged pines. The place was difficult of access, and appeared to be a land accursed ; neither the foot-print of man nor beast was to be seen there. It was one of those good for nothing tracts of country, which are sure to lead their proprietors into law suits. A farmer in the neighbourhood had put a couple of men on it to cut down the wood ; and this business he carried on for many years, till falling into a dispute with a neighbouring farmer, notice of the trespass reached the

owner, who would not have remembered that the estate was his, had it not been for his tax-bills. A suit was instituted, the farmer at last driven off from what was not worth having, and the true proprietor ruined. A story was current thereabouts that the land was good enough before the owner gained his cause; but that he was a hard man, and that the Devil had a hand in the suit, helped him gain it, and then danced over the land where the sand was now seen, and singed the grass as he went off in fire and smoke. The men said they did not know why they should go where there was nothing to be got; and a foolhardy boy who had once been a birds-nesting there, was ever afterwards looked on with suspicion, as, in some way or other, belonging to the Evil One.

When Paul now looked back, and remembered that till a little while before the world had been bare of joy to him; that the soul, living without sympathy, had been a prey to itself, and that a solitude, more dreadful than if he had stood the only living thing upon the earth, had surrounded him—the solitude and void which estrangement from others makes about us,—it was as if he had past into another state of being; and a new

nature and new delights filled him with sensations of which before he had no thought. He looked upon Esther and his mind was one rapture. Neglected and passed by, as he had been, she had stopped and spoken comfort to him and taken him by the hand, and he followed her like a child. "Thou hast been my good angel to me, Esther, and brought me out of the darkness into the comfortable light. The spring of my feelings was sealed up, but you have opened it, and they run on now taking the hues and forms of all the beautiful and blessed things with which God has filled this earth for us. My heart is fuller of joy than I well know how to bear—it aches to speak it to you ; and yet its throbbings can tell you better than words can."

This was the over contentment of a mind by nature melancholy and not knowing how to measure its joys when they came. The happiness of such minds is always in excess ; then it seems strange to them ; they question its truth ; it does not belong to them ; they fear it cannot last. They look back upon their misery as their true condition, as one which they are bound to by some fatality ; and in their hopelessness they rush into it further than before.

Paul's state was so opposite to what he had been wonted to, that it seemed to produce some indistinctness of the thoughts and senses, and he could hardly have a clear persuasion of the reality of his happiness. It partook of the visionary ; and he began to fear that his hopes and imagination had cheated him into it. In his saner moments, when he could not question its truth, he doubted its stability ; and a vague notion that this was to pass away, and something, he knew not what, to take its place, unsettled the rest of his mind and disturbed its full content. A feeling, like those ill-forebodings which sometimes come over us and then go off again, was gaining possession of him, bringing back his old melancholy, troubling his reason, and distorting all he saw.

There is a strange infatuation in gloomy minds which makes all that they are concerned in minister to their melancholy, and they seek out causes of depression with an industry more eager and unrelaxed than that with which cheerful souls hunt after pleasure. It is the craving of a diseased appetite, which is never sated.

Paul found his melancholy returning at intervals. At first he shrunk from it with the horror

that the lunatic would fly from his fits of coming madness ; but at last, as dark thoughts began to gather round him, he no longer tried to scatter them ; the fate that he imagined himself born to was oftener in his mind, and his former distrust of himself ; and with this came his doubts of others.—“ It cannot be,” he said to himself, “ that I was made to be loved of one so beautiful and of so light a heart. The gloom that shadowed me about was a mystery to her, and she was curious to know it. She saw that I was depressed and miserable, and that moved her heart to pity me ; she found that her kindness touched me and made me happy, and this stirred an innocent pride within her, and she mistook it all for love. And, fool ! fool ! so did I. Ay, and there was no one near to place this uncomely form by ; and no gay, accomplished and ready mind, to play round the sluggish, unchanging movements of mine. Poor girl, she knew not me, nor herself then ; but the knowledge will one day be revealed to her, and with a curse as heavy as fell on man in paradise.”

: Though Paul passed many such hours when alone, and was restless and impatient in company, yet the thought that Esther was his wife

was still a healing to his heart. He loved her with all that intenseness his nature was made to feel ; and it was with a kind of joyous adoration that he looked on her in his undisturbed moments. He yet could feel the reality of her fondness for him ; and he thought of it as more than an earthly blessing.

It was about this time that Frank Ridgley returned home after an absence of two years. He had been an early and ardent lover of Esther's. She had a great regard and liking for Frank, but not a particle of love for him. His case was a more hopeless one than if he had been her aversion ; for opposite passions run so into each other, particularly in women, that it is oftentimes hard to tell which is which. Perhaps Frank felt the truth of this (though he was not much in the way of philosophizing) when Esther refused him, telling him at the same time that she had a great esteem for him. For the matter of that, thought Frank, though he dared not say it, you might profess as much to my grandmother. He was angry, and mortified, and in despair ; and confounded, and not knowing what feeling he was suffering under, swore most solemnly that he would never survive his disappointment.—“ That's an unwise

resolution in you, Frank," said Esther. "Only allow yourself time to think about it till you are a little older, and you'll live to see the folly of it. —Forgive me, Frank ; I do not mean to make sport of your feelings ; but, for the life of me, I can't help thinking how bright and well you will look a twelvemonth hence."

The truth was, Frank was one of those whose feelings spend themselves on the outer man, and whose passions, violently as they seem moved, are but healthful excitement, compared with what those feel who look clayey and hard when they are agitated most. Esther knew very well that he was sincerely and warmly attached to her at the time, and that, would she consent to have him, he would make a fond husband, and wear black for her a full year after she was gone ; but that his mind was not one of those abiding places in which we find decayed, gray trees, and young shoots, running vines, and mosses, and all those close and binding growths which look so lasting, faithful and affectionate. She pitied him as we do one who has a twinge of the toothach—which nobody dies of. However bent we may be upon dying of crossed love, it is no easy matter ; next to starving one's self

to death, there is nothing which requires more resolution and perseverance. Accordingly, Frank returned in due time, glad to see his friends, with his head full of novelties, with much useful information, and a ready, lively way of showing it.

It was a damp, uncomfortable evening ; and Paul and Esther were round the fire. Paul was sitting a little on one side, in the shade, now and then making some short, serious remark, after his usual manner, with his eyes resting on Esther's countenance, as she sat looking into the fire, pondering on what he said, and the many things it led the mind to. Her face appeared all thought, and her features had a beautiful distinctness, as their deep, silent shadows fell in strong outline against the warm fire-light that shone on her. At no time had love seemed to him so quiet and domestic. He thought that he had never before been conscious how lovely and dear to us humanity may be.

There was a smart rap at the door, and in came in full spirits Frank Ridgley. Esther, who was surprised and sincerely glad to see him, showed it in her benevolent countenance. His manner was a little embarrassed ; for he had not

forgotten that he had once been in love, though now cured of it ; and remembering Esther's prophecy, he coloured and looked a little ashamed to think that she should see him alive and well again. Paul felt something like uneasiness at the expression of Esther's face, and an impatient doubt passed through his mind as he observed Frank's embarrassed manner. It was that old distrust of himself, and of his power to interest another deeply, making him question the possibility of a sincere and enduring passion for him, and not a proneness to think lightly of others' virtue, which haunted him. Frank was a man much below Paul in force of character, and feeling, and intellectual power ; yet he was his very opposite in mind and person ; and this left Paul room to harass himself with surmises, and torture himself with the agony with which humbling thoughts afflict proud men.

" Mr. Felton," said Esther, a little agitated at introducing Paul, " this is an old acquaintance of mine, Mr. Ridgley." His eye fastened on Esther, as if he was reading her very soul. He saw her agitation, but mistook the cause. He rose slowly from his chair, out of the dark corner in which he was sitting, and giving his hand deliberately

to Frank, and looking downward, said gravely, "Sir, I am happy to see you."—As the light struck upon his figure, and he took Frank's hand, Frank shrunk back a little, 'as if not altogether safe. The deep, and scarcely audible voice in which he spoke, his dark countenance, his low, muscular form on which Frank looked down, all seemed possessed of some strange power. Frank involuntarily turned towards Esther, as if in wonder that any thing belonging to such a being could be so gentle, and fair, and cheerful. Esther trembled as she observed Paul, though she hardly knew why; and seeing Frank looking at her, blushed deeply, for she knew what was passing in his mind. Paul glanced his eye swiftly on both of them, and bowing low, drew back into his seat.

The room was lighted, and Frank, who was of too cheerful a disposition to be made long uneasy by unpleasant thoughts, began in full spirits to talk about old times and all he had seen since leaving home. His gayety was not of that sort which we sit and look at with a good natured acquiescence, and are pleased to see so well played off; but it was communicative, driving away our troubles, and

making us feel for the time as if we ourselves were of too happy a temperament ever to be melancholy. He was a man of good sense, too, and of right honest and kind feelings, and therefore much better fitted for the true purposes of travel than those who go equipped with every thing that can be thought of except straight heads and good hearts. His gayety and humour were mingled with just observations, and softened down by the propriety and delicacy natural to his character; and these, with a graceful and elegant person and handsome countenance, and a certain deference of manner, made him a favourite wherever he went, particularly amongst the women.

Notwithstanding the effect Paul's appearance had on him, he knew Esther too well to think that any attention he might pay her would reconcile her to a neglect of her husband. This might be one of her singularities; but it was not to be disregarded. Besides, however reserved and silent Paul might be, no one could sit near him and forget who was by his side. Though Paul was distant and cold at first, the ease and propriety of Frank's remarks were not unobserved by him, and he was gradually led to

take a part in the conversation ; and when he did, Frank no longer wondered at his power over Esther ; though at the same time, (he knew not why,) he was conscious of something like uneasiness and distrust on her account. On the whole, the evening passed off very well, and Esther's heart was lightened to think it had ended so much better than it began.

When Frank withdrew, Paul became silent.—“ It is not yet quite two years since she first saw me,” said he to himself ; “ and who can tell how many times since she was a child, to that hour, she has sighed as she thought on some other man ?”—He stirred in his chair. Esther looked at him, but he seemed buried in thought.—“ And is it mere chance that has fixed her love at last on me ? And have the same hopes and same desires which rest on me, been breathed forth in silence for another when I was unknown ? And had she never seen me, might she not have looked as fondly on some other man, and hung on him as she will on me now ?”—It was hateful to him to think on it. There is no man of sentiment who would not gladly be rid of such thoughts if he could ; he practises upon himself to believe it was otherwise ; and though half

conscious of the self-deception, gathers some relief even from that. But Paul was made for self-torture ; beside, he had so long lived a lonely man, that what he felt, was not so to be shuffled off. He considered with himself, and considered truly, that there is not one woman in a thousand, who has not, at some time or other, imagined herself in love with another man than him she at last marries. It made him writhe with impatience.

At last Esther said aloud, but without raising her eyes from a print on which she was looking, "he is certainly very amiable."

"Do you mean that swine-feeder?" asked Paul sarcastically, as he looked up.

"I was not then thinking of him or his pigs," she replied, smiling.

"You should be more definite then, my dear. You forget that every one's thoughts do not take the same road with yours. Yes, he is one of the handsomest men I've met with, and of a very winning address."

"Handsome, did I say?" asked Esther.

"I know not that you did ; yet you think him so, surely, do you not?"

"Certainly I do; but I was speaking of his heart."

"O, of his heart. Of that you know more than I do."

"And well I may, Paul, for I have known Frank Ridgley from a boy."

"Very like," said Paul—then spoke of the weather, and soon left the room. He at this time believed Esther of a mind as open as the day; yet because his own person and bearing had nothing graceful or attractive in it, he made these properties of too much importance, forgetting how much less women regard such things in us than we do in them. He remembered Frank's appearance, and the idea took possession of him, that there must have been a time when he had place in her youthful imagination. This was a poisonous thought to take root in a mind like Paul's.

The next day, as Paul was returning home from a morning's walk, he saw at a distance, Frank leaving the house.—"I thought as much, —a lady's man, who plays his glove, and shows a white hand. We value ourselves and are valued on the turn of a finger nail; and what is worse, our sober, retired thoughts are put

out o'doors, and our minds fitted up for shows and gala-days."

Frank soon came along, looking fresh as the morning, and wished Paul, gayly, a pleasant day, as he passed by. Paul bowed his head slowly, and walked on homeward.

"And what have you there?" asked Esther, going towards him as he entered the room.

"Constancy, Esther, constancy."

"Give it me then," said she, catching it out of his hand. "Yet I'll not take it all. There, it shall be between us. Stay, let me have it again, and I'll plant it under this window that it may grow all together. And I'll water it daily."

"Look well to it, lest a blight take it."

"It is not so tender that it need watching so, surely."

"Yes, but it is, Esther—it is often blasted."

"I read not so of it."

"Then your books are a lie; do not trust them."

"I will not, nor myself neither. 'Tis yours again, and you shall tend it. I am too heedless and gay for such continual care. Come, lay by that sombre countenance, and fit you with a

more cheerful look, for we are to have a splendid ball at the village. Frank has been here and spoiled my morning, with talk of figures and dresses. And I know not but that you would have found me in full practice, had I not protested against dancing at high noon.—Now, take me not in earnest, Paul.”

“Would that I could tell when I might, Esther. My heart is ill at ease, and I cannot trifle now.”

“And is it I, who have broken its peace?” asked she, as she leaned fondly on him. “It was my hope, and all which made me happy, that I should be its place of rest and joy. I seem to you too much a trifler for your graver nature. I, too, was graver than now before I knew you, Paul. It is the overjoy that you have filled my heart with, which makes me so prattling and wild, like a child. ’Tis that I feel almost too much, and not too little. Yet sometimes it makes me thoughtful, nearly to melancholy, instead of gay. I wish it always did, for then I should be like you, and content you better. And you would never then cast on me that look of sorrow and reproof which you did just now, would you, Paul?” she asked, looking up at him,

with a smile, as she rested on him, the tears starting to her eyes.

“Be like me, Esther! You little know what you’re wishing for. Be like yourself,” said he, laying his hand on her open brow, “be good and be happy. Misery is but another name for sin,—for imperfect virtue. Could we cast off our frailties, man might walk through the afflictions, the losses, and wrongs of life with the calm of heaven within him, and its glory round about him. I’ve had visions of it, and they have changed this vile thing you lean on, to the bright soul and shape of angels.”

She gazed on him without breathing. His face was turned upward, and he seemed as if seeing into the world above him. His look was fixed and calm as the sky. He stood for a time as if rapt in holy converse. By and by a cloud passed, his countenance became dark as night, and his head sunk on his bosom. Esther could look no longer. Paul seemed sinking beneath her weight. She raised herself, and he turned, and walked slowly out of the room. She would have followed him, but she could not move.

He took a path which led through the fields back of his house, and wound amongst the steep

rocks part way up the range of high hills, till it reached a small locust grove, where it ended. He began climbing a ridge near him, and reaching the top of it, beheld all around him a scene as desolate and broken as the ocean. For miles it seemed as if one immense gray rock had been heaved up and shattered by an earthquake. Here and there might be seen shooting out of the clefts, old trees, like masts at sea. It was as if the ocean in a storm, had become suddenly fixed, with all its ships upon it. The sun shone glaring and hot on it, but there was neither life, nor motion, nor sound ;—the spirit of Desolation had gone over it, and it had become the place of death. His heart sunk within him, and something like a superstitious dread entered him. He tried to rouse himself and look about with a composed mind. It was all in vain—he felt as if some dreadful, unseen power stood near him. He would have spoken, but he dared not in such a place.

To shake this off, he began clambering over one ridge after another, till passing cautiously round a beetling rock, a sharp cry from out it shot through him. Every small jut and precipice sent it back with a satanic

taunt, and the crowd of hollows and points seemed for an instant alive with thousands of fiends. Paul's blood ran cold; and he scarcely breathed as he waited for their cry again; but all was still. Though his mind was of a superstitious cast, he had courage and fortitude; and ashamed of his weakness, he reached forward, and stooping down looked into the cavity. He started as his eye fell on the object within it. "Who and what are you?" cried he. "Come out and let me see whether you are man or devil." And out crawled a miserable boy, that seemed shrunk up with fear and famine. "Speak, and tell me who you are, and what you do here," said Paul. The poor fellow's jaws moved and quivered, but he did not utter a sound. His spare frame shook, and his knees knocked against each other, as in an ague fit. Paul looked at him for a moment. His loose, shamblly frame was nearly bare to the bones, his light sunburnt hair hung long and straight round his thin jaws, and white eyes, that shone with a delirious glare, as if his mind had been terror struck. There was a sickly, beseeching smile about his mouth. His skin between the freckles was as white as a leper's,

and his teeth long and yellow. He looked as if he had witnessed the destruction about him, and was the only living thing spared, to make death seem more horrible.—“Who put you here to starve?” said Paul to him.

“Nobody, sir.”

“Why did you come, then?”

“O, I can’t help it, I must come.”

“Must!” said Paul, “and why must you?”

The boy looked round timidly, and crouching near Paul, said, in a tremulous, low voice, his eyes glaring fearfully through a chasm. “’Tis He, ’tis He, that makes me.”—Paul turned suddenly round and saw before him, for the first time, the deserted tract of pine wood and sand, which has been mentioned.—“Who and where is he,” asked Paul, impatiently, expecting to see some one.

“There, there, in the wood yonder,” answered the boy, crouching still lower, and pointing with his finger, whilst his hand shook as if palsied.

“I see nothing,” said Paul, “but these pines. What possesses you? Why do you shudder so, and look so pale? Do you take the shadows of the trees for devils?”

"Don't speak of them. They'll be on me if you talk of them here," whispered the boy eagerly. Drops of sweat stood on his brow from the agony of terror he was in. As Paul looked at the lad, he felt something like fear creeping over him. He turned his eyes involuntarily to the wood again. "If we must not talk here," said he at last, "come along with me, and tell me what all this means." The boy rose, and followed close to Paul.

"Is it the devil you have seen," asked Paul, "that you shake so?"

"You have named him, I never must," said the boy. "Strange sights I have seen, and heard sounds whispered close to my ears, and so full of spite, and so dreadful, I dared not look round, lest I should see some awful face at mine. I've thought I felt it touch me sometimes."

"And what wicked thing have you done that they should haunt you so?"

"O, Sir, I was a foolhardy boy. Two years ago I was not afraid of any thing. Nobody dared go into that wood, or even so much as over the rocks, to look at it, after what happened there."—"I've heard a foolish story," said Paul. —"So once, Sir, the thought took me that I

would go there a birds-nesting, and bring home the eggs and show to the men. And it would never out of my mind after, though I began to wish I hadn't thought any such thing. Every night when I went to bed, I would lie and say to myself that to-morrow was the day for me to go ; and I did not like to be alone in the dark, and wanted some one with me to touch me when I had bad dreams. And when I waked in the morning, I felt as if something dreadful was coming upon me before night. Well, every day, I don't know how it was, I found myself near this ridge ; and every time, I went farther and farther up it, though I grew more and more frightened ; and when I had gone as far as I dared, I was afraid to wait, but would turn and make away so fast, that many a time I fell down some of these places, and got lamed and bruised. The boys began to think something ; and would whisper each other and look at me, and when they found I saw them, they would turn away. It grew hard for me to be one at their games, though once I used to be the first chosen in. I can't tell how it was, but all this only made me go on ; and as the boys kept out of the way, I began to feel as if I must do what I had thought

of, and as if there was somebody, I couldn't think who, that was to have me and make me do what he pleased. So it went on, Sir, day after day," continued the lad in a weak, timid tone, but comforted at finding one to tell his story to, "till at last I reached as far as the hollow where you just now frightened me so, when I heard you near me. I didn't run off, as I used to from the other places, but sat down under the rock. Then I looked out, and saw the trees. I tried to get up and run home, but I couldn't; I dared not come out and go round the corner of the rock. I tried to look another way, but my eyes seemed fastened on the trees, I couldn't take 'em off. At last I thought something told me it was time for me to go on. I got up."

Here poor Abel shook so that he seized hold of Paul's arm to help him. Paul recoiled as if some unclean creature touched him. The boy shrunk back.

"Go on," said Paul, recovering himself. The boy took comfort from the sound of another's voice.—"I went a little way down the hollow, Sir, as if drawn along. Then I came to a steep place; I put my legs over to let myself down; my knees grew so weak I dared not trust

myself ; I tried to draw them up, but the strength was all gone out of them, and then my feet were as heavy as if made of lead. I gave a screech ; and there was a yell close to me, and for miles round, that nigh stunned me. I can't say how, but the last thing I knew was being mad and leaping along the rocks, while there was nothing but flames of fire shooting all round me. It was scarce mid-day when I left home ; and when I came to myself under these locusts, it was growing dark."

"Rest here awhile," said Paul, looking at the boy as at some mysterious being, "and tell out your story."

Glad at being in company, the boy sat down upon the grass, and went on with his story.— "I crawled home as well as I could, and went to bed. When I was falling asleep I had the same feeling I had when sitting over the rock. I dared not lie in bed any longer ; for I couldn't keep awake while there. Glad was I when the day broke, and I saw a neighbour open his door, and come out. I was not well all day ; and I tried to think myself more ill than I was, because I somehow thought that then I needn't go to the wood. But the next day He was not

to be put off; and I went, though I cried and prayed all the way that I might not be made to go. But I could not stop till I had got over all the hill, and reached the sand round the wood. When I put my foot on it, all the joints in me jerked as if going out of place; so that I cried out with the pain. When I came under the trees, there was a noise, and shadows all round me. My hair stood on end, and my eyes kept glimmering; yet I couldn't go back. I went on till I found a crow's nest. I climbed the tree, and took out the eggs. The old crow kept flying round and round me. As soon as I felt the eggs in my hand, and my work done, I dropped from the tree, and ran for the hollow. How it was I can't tell, but it seemed to me I didn't gain a foot of ground,—it was just as if the whole wood went with me. Then I thought He had me his. The ground began to bend and the trees to move. At last I was nigh blind. I struck against one tree and another till I fell to the ground. How long I lay there I can't tell; but when I came to, I was on the sand, the sun blazing hot upon me, and my skin scorched up. I was so stiff, and ached so, I could hardly stand upright. I didn't feel or think any thing after this; and

hardly knew where I was, till somebody came and touched me, and asked me whether I was walking in my sleep ; and I looked up, and found myself close home.

“ The boys began to gather round, as if I were something strange ; and when I looked at them, they would move back from me.—‘ What have you been doing Abel ?’ one of them asked me, at last.—‘ No good, I warrant you,’ answered another who stood back of me ; and when I turned round to speak to him he drew behind the others as if afraid I should harm him,—and I was too weak and frightened to hurt a fly.—‘ See his hands ; they are stained all over. And there’s a crow’s egg, as I’m alive,’ said another. ‘ And the crow is the Devil’s bird, Tom, isn’t it ?’ asked a little boy. ‘ O, Abel, you’ve been to that wood, and made yourself over.’—They moved off one after another, every now and then turning round and looking at me as if I were cursed. After this they would not speak to me, nor come nigh me. I heard people talking, and saw them going about, but not one of them all could I speak to, or get to come near me ; it was dreadful, being so alone ! I met a boy that used to be with me all day long ; and I begged him

not to go off from me so, and to stop, if it were only for a moment. 'You played with me once,' said I, 'and won't you so much as look at me, or ask me how I am, when I am so weak and ill, too?' He began to hang back a little, and I thought, from his face, that he pitied me. I could have cried for joy; and was going up to him, but he turned away. I called out after him, telling him that I would not so much as touch him with my finger, or come any nigher to him, if he would only stop and speak one word to me; but he went away shaking his head, and muttering something, I hardly knew what, how that I did not belong to them, but was the Evil One's now. I sat down on a stone and cried, and wished that I was dead; for I couldn't help it, though it was wicked in me to do so."

"And is there no one," asked Paul, who will notice you, or speak to you? Do you live so alone now?" It made his heart ache to look down upon the pining, forlorn creature before him.

"Not a soul," whined out the boy. "My Grandmother is dead now; and only the gentle-folks give me any thing; for they don't seem

afraid of me, though they look as if they didn't like me, and wanted me gone. All I can, I get to eat in the woods, and beg out of the village. But I dare not go far, because I don't know when He will want me. But I am not alone; He's with me day and night. As I go along the street in the day time, I feel Him near me, though I can't see Him; and it is as if He were speaking to me, and yet I don't hear any words. He makes me follow Him to that wood, and I have to sit the whole day where you found me; and I dare not complain nor move, till I feel He will let me go. I've looked at the pines, sometimes, till I've seen as many spirits moving amongst them, as there are trees—O, 'tis an awful place,—they breathe cold upon me when He makes me go there."

"Poor wretch," said Paul.

"I'm weak and hungry," said the boy, "and yet when I try to eat, something chokes me; I don't love what I eat."

"Come along with me," said Paul, "and you shall have something to nourish and warm you; for you are pale, and shiver and look cold here in the sun."

The boy looked up at Paul, and the tears rolled down his cheeks, at hearing one speak so kindly to him. He got up, and followed meekly after, to the house.

Paul seeing a servant in the yard, ordered the boy something to eat. The man cast his eye upon Abel, and then looked at Paul as if he had not understood him.—“I spoke distinctly enough;” said Paul, “and don’t you see that the boy is nigh starved?”—The man gave a mysterious look at both of them, and with a shake of his head, as he turned away, went to do as he was bid.

“What means the fellow?” said Paul to himself, as he entered the house. “Does he take me to be bound to Satan, too? Yet there may be bonds upon the soul, though we know it not; and evil spirits at work within us of which we little dream. And are there no beings but those seen of mortal eye, or felt by mortal touch? Are there not passing in and round this piece of moving mould, in which the spirit is pent up, those that it hears not, and has no finer sense whereby to commune with them? Are all the instant joys that come and go, we know not whence nor whither, but creations of the mind;

or are they not bright and heavenly messengers, which, when this dull form drops off, and the spirit is set free, 'twill see in all their beauty, and drink in of their sweet sounds? O, yes, it is so; and all around us is populous with joyous beings, invisible to us as the air."

So fully had such thoughts absorbed Paul's mind, that when, upon entering the room, he met Esther and her father, he started, as if the sight of flesh and blood were strange to him. At dinner he seemed but half conscious of what was before him; his look and manner were abstracted; and when he replied to any remark, his answers were abrupt and from the purpose.

"You are a good deal of a dreamer, I know," said Mr. Waring at last; "but I think I never saw you less awake to what's homely and substantial in this world we live in."

"They sleep, and their eyes are sealed, who do not look beyond it," said Paul, just so as to be heard.

The old gentleman looked at Esther; but her eyes were fixed on Paul, who did not observe it, for his were cast downward. Her heart beat with uneasy sensations, and anxious, uncertain thoughts troubled her. She tried to command

herself ; and as soon as she could, she spoke to him in an affectionate, cheerful voice. He looked suddenly up at her with a fond and rapturous gaze, as if an angel had spoken to him out of a cloud.—“ Ah,” said she, playfully, “ I’ve called you back to earth again, Paul.”

“ Scarce to earth,” said he, his suffused eye resting on her beautiful face.—He had quite forgotten that any one was by, till the old gentleman spoke. The blood went quick to his cheek.

“ What, so long married, and a lover yet ?” cried Mr. Waring. “ I thought love would have become a dearer sort of friendship ere this.”

“ I doubt,” said Paul, half smiling, and glad to turn the affair into a speculation, “ I doubt whether, in certain minds, love ever so changes its nature. It is a part of their constitution, and endures as long as they do, at least, I think so ; though I cannot tell what old age and gray hairs may do towards a change. It is the only thing that has made me recoil from the thought of being an old man.”

“ And what would you make of a pair of married lovers of threescore ?”

“ I like not thinking of it,” said Paul, with a fitful expression of pain. “ I would rather part

soul and body, than lose long cherished and dear thoughts. Nor do I believe they will be lost. Those who are good enough for a happy state hereafter, must rest their chief hopes and pleasures, even in their attachments here, on that which is fitted to live forever. The corruption of humanity that's now about them will drop off, but essentially, I trust, our feelings and joys will remain the same. What makes my soul's chief earthly happiness would be my misery, did I not believe it eternal, like the soul itself. To die, will be but the full opening of this same mind with all its good affections, which scarcely bud here, to the light and sweet air of heaven. Is what we tread on here, truth,—and our imaginations all a lie? I would believe that these high and gladdening conceptions were not all a cheat, but that they will one day open in glory on our cleared and delighted vision. What is beautiful and true here, though it perish for a season, will put forth again in more perfect beauty in the morning light of that sun which will never go down. Pardon my warmth, Sir," said he, suddenly checking himself.

"Then," said Mr. Waring, "you think the after existence of the happy but the continuance

of their earthly affections purified and exalted, along, you mean, no doubt, with a greater love and knowledge of God.

“Much so, Sir.”

“Has not your religion too much to do with the senses?”

“It is idle presumption to reason about what we know so very little of. I was simply saying what were my hopes and wishes, and what gave me here, that which seemed to me like a foretaste of joys hereafter, and had at times persuaded me, that what I felt was not a vain imagination. I cannot so separate the natures of the mind and senses as some would do. There is not an earthly beauty I look upon that has not something in it spiritual to me. And when my mind is fair and open, and soul right, there is not a flower I see that does not move my heart to feel towards it as a child of God. All that is, to my mind is a type of what shall be; and my own being and soul seem to me as if linked with it to eternity. I know that to many this is mere folly, and that even to those of highest reach it is but vague; for what can we have while here but intimations and dim semblances of eternity. Yet for that, a man might

as well deny he has a heart ; for he will find it growing the more a mystery, the more he studies it. We think of angels as having shapes and voices, and if the unbelieving would say that the writ is false, how came the mind of man from the beginning to conceive of such things as true ? Is that connected with our highest faith, and what seems inborn in the mind, a lie ?”

Paul became silent ; he was filled with happier and calmer emotions than he had for a long time known. Esther observed his tranquillity, and for a while she was blest with the belief that it would be lasting. She knew that such thoughts were not strangers to him ; but she had seen them before only when they came and went swiftly, lifting him suddenly and wildly out of horror and despair, to a rapturous height, then leaving him to sink deeper than ever. When his dark thoughts and passions seized him, they seemed to her more like outward, terrific powers which drove him whither they would, than like things springing from his own mind and heart. There was a mystery about them that made her fear when they took him, and yet her heart bled with pity for him.

There are souls which have hours of bright and holy aspirations, when they feel as if nothing of earth or sin could touch them more ; but in the midst of their clear and joyous calm they find some dark and frightful passion, like an ugly devil, beginning to stir within them. The mind tries to fly from it, but, as if it saw its hour, it seizes on its prey with a fanged hold,—rending all beneath it. Perhaps there are no minds of the highest intellectual order that have not known such moments, when they would have fled from the thoughts and sensations which they felt like visitants from hell.

Paul's mind was of this structure ; and so long and violently had he suffered under such influences, that his natural superstition, heightened by them, had almost persuaded him his passions were good or evil spirits which had power to bless or curse him. The story and appearance of poor Abel haunted him. He called it insanity ; but he could not shake off the feeling that the miserable wretch was the victim of a Demon. He began to tremble for himself ; and when he felt his violent passions in motion, the thought that they were powers it was in vain to struggle against, almost drove him mad.

The night for the ball at last came, and Esther's spirits rose as the hour drew nigh. She had left home but little for a long time past, and though her love for Paul was almost devotion, and there was a peculiar sentiment and delicacy in his little attentions to her and the fondness he showed her, yet an undefined awe, a dread of the happening of something fatal, oppressed her daily more and more ; and any change seemed to be the lifting of a weight from the heart, to let it bound and beat freely again. Her mind, and all her senses were peculiarly sensitive, and exquisitely alive to enjoyment. Her whole soul seemed to be in whatever she said and did. When Paul was happy, he looked on all this with a delight that cannot be told ; but when a gloom hung on his mind, and he saw her eloquent, impassioned face and earnest gestures, he remembered how deceitful and prone to sin are the best hearts, how soon the warmed passions may turn from good to evil, and he hardly dared look on what he indistinctly dreaded.

Esther came bounding towards Paul with a step as light as if she needed only the air to tread on. "Rouse you, ye dreamer," said she, playfully jogging him,—“we are late. Look

up, and vow to me that I was never half so beautiful before."

"O, that I can vow to you from day to day; for you grow in beauty on me, as you grow closer and closer to my heart."

"What an angelic creature I shall seem to you at fifty then! How lucky that you had me; for who else would praise my beauty when turned of two score?"

"Be not too sure, Esther; my eyes may be shut to all beauty before that time comes. Then you may find others to praise it in you—if you will believe them."

"Not of death now, Paul, not of death now.—Come, let us be going. We've lived here in this stillness so long, that the sound of pipe and tabour will stir my blood like a new come Greenland summer."

"'Tis at a full and quick beat now, if I feel it right," said he, holding her by the wrist, "a little faster might do you harm."

"Beat it slow or fast, Paul, there's not a drop of it passes through the heart that is not warm to me with a love for you.—Think you I profess too much?"

"No, not too much."

“Why then look you so sad upon it?”

“To remember that I cannot always think so.”

“And why not always? Do you hold me of so unstable a nature?”

“Ask me not what I cannot answer you. It is not myself,” cried he, starting from her.—“They haunt me. I cannot ’scape them.—Away, away, I’m not your prey yet!”—He walked the room violently, his clasped hands pressing down upon his head as if his brain would burst with its working. His eyes were set, and his teeth ground against each other. He stopped, and his frame loosened from its tenseness.—“It’s over,” said he, spreading his arms wide, as if just set free.

Esther shook with fear as she stood fixed, gazing at him. When the change came on him, she went to him.—“Paul, my own husband,” said she, taking his hand, “come to me, tell me what terrible thoughts they are that tear you so.”

“Thoughts, call you them? . Visions, shadows, horrible, horrible shadows! Speak not of them; call them not round me again.—O, Esther, I am sore afflicted;—I would that I might not suffer so. Pray for my soul’s peace, Esther. It longs,

it longs to rest quietly in its love for you.—Put your arms round me. There, I'm tranquil now.”

“If they would keep you so, I would shelter you day and night, Paul, and look and think on nothing but you.”

“Even here I'm not safe ; there's no place of refuge for the hunted soul.”

“Above, there is, Paul, if we but reach upward.”

“I've striven in agony to reach it ; but when they will, these horrors, that have no name, pluck me down. But, come, they've left me now ; and the bosom's free again.”—He held her at his arm's length, and stood gazing on her.—“And could dark, terrible thoughts shake me so, before all this light and beauty ! Why, Esther, I feel by you, like a cast out angel by the side of one who had stood faithful.—I've held you too long. Your father waits for you ;—away, and forget my madness.”

“Not without you, Paul.”

“What, I ! No, in faith ! A married pair go regularly coupled at the hour set ! No, no, I'm not such a rustic as you take me for.”

“Do not so suddenly trifle in this way, Paul ; it grieves me more than all ; it is not your disposition.”

“In earnest, then, the blood heaves too heavy through me yet ; when it flows more quietly, I’ll come to you.”

He pressed her hand gently as he put her into the carriage, and gave her one of those smiles which always went like sunshine to Esther’s heart.—He saw her look back after him as the carriage turned down the road, and stretched his arms out towards her as if to clasp her to him. As he raised his hands upward,—“O, heaven,” he said, “thou hast given her to me as more than an earthly blessing, let it not prove a curse upon my soul!”—He felt something clasp his knees, and looking down, he sprang as from the coil of a serpent.—“Were you sent to snare me now, you imp of Hell? How crawled you here, and for what?”

“I watched for you under this thorn,” whined out poor Abel, “for I shall die if I cannot see you and speak to you. And when you prayed, I came up to you, that you would pray for me, that I might be spared going, if ’twere only for this one night.”

“I’ve sins and tortures of my own enough. Pray for yourself, poor wretch.”

“I dare not, I dare not,” cried Abel, “lest He

come and torment me. O, help me. You were good to me once."

"And what mortal might can shield you against unearthly powers?"

"I feel safer when near you, though you make me tremble. Not a soul beside will so much as hear me when I call after them. I've thought, that, perhaps, nobody but you could hear me any more."

"And why I?—Don't put your lean hand on me."

Abel shrunk back. The loathing that Paul felt turned to pity. "Come, you are hungry, and must have something to strengthen you." Paul took the boy into the house; and having seen him fed, gave him an old rug to lie upon. "Sleep there, Abel, you shall not to the wood to-night." Abel felt comforted and protected for the first time since the thought of the wood entered his head. In a few minutes he was in a sound sleep.

Paul took his way along the greensward to the village. As he passed the bush under which Abel had been sitting, he involuntarily moved a little aside from it.—"Why has that boy fastened so on me? I like it not. There'll no good

come of it. When he is near me, I feel him as one cursed, and bringing a curse. The powers of darkness put him between me and mine ; and promptings of dreadful portent are whispered in my ear." His mind grew more disturbed as he went forward, ruminating on these things ; till having nearly reached the end of his walk, he stopped under a large tree, that he might gain sufficient composure and a clear brow to enter the room.

Not a leaf moved, and the stars shone in silence. Suddenly the music burst forth from the hall ;—To Paul it was like a crash that jarred the still universe. "'Tis hateful to me ;—noise, and folly, and hot, hot blood. Warm hands, and flushed cheeks, and high beating hearts. And where is she, who an hour ago would have sheltered Paul, and looked and thought on nothing but him ? No more to her now than if he had never been—or had slept a twelvemonth in his grave. These creatures are beautiful and fair, and would be innocent as flowers, did none but heaven's winds visit them ; but the world's breath blows on them, and taints them. Beings all of sensations ; and so love's grateful to them. But it roots not deep and si-

lently as in man ; from whom to pluck it out, tears up heart and all.—Leave me, leave me, let me not think on't !” He rushed forward, as if to fly from the thought.

Scarcely considering whither he was going, he was in an instant before the folding doors of the hall. Coming out of the quiet and the dim light, the flare of the lamps, the whirl and confused motions, and the babel sounds of a ball-room, breaking suddenly upon him, blinded and confounded him. He pressed his brows hard together to recover his senses a little, and then entered the room. One who is unused to such scenes can scarcely tell his familiar acquaintances at first. Paul was in eager search of one, as he passed round the room close to the wall. He had just gone by without discovering her, when a well-known laugh, though louder than usual, made him suddenly stop. As he turned, Esther sprang forward in the dance as if going up into the air. A bright smile, full of pleasure, was in her face, as she gave Frank both her hands ; and as they bounded swiftly by Paul, without perceiving him, he saw the warm glow upon her cheek, her eyes turned a little upward, suffused and sparkling, her dark, floating curls rising, then

just touching her snowy forehead, then lifted with the motion again, her bosom tinged with a delicate tint, and moving with a fluttering beat. "Heaven and hell!" said he to himself, "ye work side by side in this world, though with opposite intent." Every nerve in his body seemed to shoot and burn with electric fire. It passed off, and a sudden weak, sick feeling followed it, that he could scarcely stand. A cold damp stood on his pale brow and trembling hands. He drew behind a couple of gentlemen, who were talking together, looking on the dance, and leaned against the wall. For a while he dared not look up; nor did he hear any sound till the conversation of the gentlemen suddenly drew his attention.

"What an exquisite figure, and how pliable and graceful," said one. "Every limb seems full of life."

"Yes," said the other, "and how sinuous the motions; they run into each other like the swells of the sea. Oh, she's a very Perdita in the dance. And Frank was an elegant looking fellow before he went away, yet travel has improved him wonderfully. I would bet my head on't, that she is sighing this moment at thinking

she said him nay, or had not waited to see him what he is now, that she might to-night unsay it again."

"Then she is a betrothed damsel, ha? Poor girl, that she should be in such haste. I warrant ye, this dancing partnership will put thoughts into her head which a lover would hardly like finding there. It will be well for her by and by if she doesn't talk in her sleep."

"If she can't teach her tongue silence then, 'tis a gone case with her already, for she was married long ago."

"And what gallant knight won her? He must keep watch and ward, for in faith I'm half a mind to make off with her myself, could I bring her to it."

"No hard matter that, if report speaks her Lord truly. 'Tis a sort of Vulcan and Venus match, I'm told, and that he looks as black as if just out of a smithy; and is glum, and says nothing. By all accounts, they are dead opposites in mind and body. She'll be on the wing all night, I vouch for it, and make up for the last month's caging."

"Poor girl, I pity her. But how could she find it in her heart to refuse Ridgley? I should

have thought that for a man like him, once asking would have been enough, any where."

"Why, lord, she no more meant it, than she did to die a maid. The blockhead might have known she was a coquette, as every one else did, and that she was but teasing him. One with half an eye might have seen what a favourite he was with her. Why, she would have gone to church barefoot rather than not have had him. The fool took her in earnest, and went upon his travels, and she married to vex him. Silly things! Unless she wears the widow's stole they may pine their hearts out now—or else the stars must wink at it. But come away, I'll look no longer, lest I covet my neighbour's wife."—And off they moved, arm in arm, casting their eyes back upon Esther as they went.

Every word they uttered entered Paul's soul. His brain felt to him tightened and hardened like sinews, with the dreadful thoughts that rose in his mind. In a moment, all the misgivings and surmises of his doubting and gloomy soul, on which, till now, he scarcely dared send a glance, were turned to certainties; and his eye fastened on them as if held by some charm. He pressed with his back against the wall with a

look of horror ; and with fixed glaring eyes, as if crowds of spectres were rising up before him ; and his hair stood up as if life were in it. Those near him observed his strange appearance, and drew softly back, looking at him and then at each other in silence, as if in wonder and fear at what they saw. He took no notice of what was passing, but seemed to be gazing on something terrible which none but he saw. The dancing had stopped, and a mysterious silence spread like a shadow over all that part of the room. Esther spoke in a clear, gay tone to some one by her. The sound struck his ear ; he gave a leap forward, his eye still fixed on the floor.—“ Ha ! are ye there ?” muttered he.—Presently a change seemed taking place in his mind, and he looked round him as if asking where he was.

Mr. Waring, who observed something unusual had happened, went that way, and found Paul standing alone, his eye dull and wandering, his whole frame trembling, his lips livid, and the sweat standing in big drops on his broad, pale forehead. Seizing Paul by the arm, as he called him by name, and shaking him to rouse him, Paul started, giving the old gentleman a look of amazement.—“ What mean ye, what’s the mat-

ter that you handle me thus? Ha, ha,—I did not know you, old man. Your daughter's fair and honest, is she not; and loves her husband truly, ah, truly, does she not? for she herself told me so."

"This pent atmosphere has overcome him," cried Mr. Waring, "he's unused to it." And he turned Paul, to lead him into the open air. Paul looked at him once more, as if to ask what he was doing, and then suffered himself to be led out of the room. He took, without seeming conscious of it, what Mr. Waring gave him; and they walked to an outer door.

"This night air's cold," said Paul, shuddering.

"Cold?" asked the old gentleman, surprised. He felt of Paul's hand and forehead; it was like touching the dead.

"You're ill, quite ill, Mr. Felton; you must go home. Let me find Esther."

"I've found her out before you, old man.—Stay," said he, in an eager whisper, seizing Mr. Waring by the arm, and looking close in his face, "the net's nigh set that's to catch that bird; would you scare her away?"

"This will never do; you must go with me then. Your situation is worse than you are aware of."

“No, in faith, it is not,” said Paul bitterly. “It was, but I know the worst now.—Let’s to the room;” said he quickly, “the fit’s over, and I’m well again.”

“Not well I fear,” said Mr. Waring.

“Yes, quite well, mind and body both;” replied Paul, drawing himself up briskly and rubbing his hands together hard, “and I’m calm, perfectly calm.” He turned, and leaving the old gentleman at the door, walked into the room as composedly as if nothing had happened. Those who had seen him, supposed that the close, hot air had oppressed his brain, and thought nothing more of the matter. Mr. Waring remembered his mysterious words, and was alarmed; for he had some little insight into the structure of Paul’s mind.

Esther had mingled with the crowd at a distant part of the room; but Paul soon discovered where she was; for she was carrying on a brisk conversation with those round her. He drew near enough to hear her gay laugh, and the bandying of smart and pleasant sayings from one to another. Other thoughts and feelings filled Paul’s soul. He stood amidst all the light and rattle like some black, solid body that noth-

ing penetrated. Mysterious shapes, which told him in part of something dreadful, were wandering through his mind with a fearful, shadow-like stillness—the scene directly before him seemed set off at an infinite distance; and his lonely soul held its own musings, known to none of earth.

“Can we love,” said he to himself, “and one be sad, and yet no secret sympathy tell the other of it? Were Esther cast down, though I saw her not, the spirits that are about us, and know what’s in our hearts, would whisper it to me.—Idiot! boy! Talk I of love? Is not her heart another’s? Ere I knew her, ’twas his. In mind—in mind she’s his now—at this instant, his.”—He darted from the place he was in, and taking his stand just outside the circle, and opposite Esther, stood watching her, without being seen. Frank was by her side, playing with her fan. “What, so constant!” said Paul to himself. “Could not the seas nor travel cure you! But I have that that will. Yet ye’re a faithful pair; and it would break two loving hearts. No, no, I’ll not be cruel. Why talk I of you, ye coxcomb?—What are you to me? ’Tis she, ’tis she; and I’ll see what’s in that heart, though I tear it from her.”

“And where’s Mr. Felton to-night, that he’s not with us?” asked one.—“O, at home, no doubt,” answered a peevish maiden. ‘He loves no plays, as thou dost, Antony,’” said she maliciously, looking first at Frank and then at Esther. Esther could not but observe her very significant manner; and innocent as her heart was of all improper thoughts, she felt pained and embarrassed. Paul watched the changes of her countenance. “And is her name so stale already?” said he to himself. “Do they tell her to her very teeth that she’s a ——?”—

There was a short pause. Esther was looking beyond the circle to relieve herself of the sight of those immediately about her, when her eyes suddenly met those of Paul, which were fixed on her with a deadly look. She started back with a shriek. There was a general alarm, and Paul pressed in towards her.—“What’s the matter, what was it?” cried they all at once. “I know not,” said Esther, trying to recover herself a little. “’Twas a—a spider, I believe.”

“Ugly things those,” muttered Paul to her in an under tone, as he half supported her,—“that lie hid in corners with meshes spread for silly flies. Beware, for they draw the blood, and

leave their prey hanging for the common eye.” Esther shuddered at his words, as she heard his breath come hard from suppressed passion. She nearly sank to the floor, confounded, mortified and afraid. Never had Paul looked on her so before. She had seen hate, and revenge, and triumph in his eye. Then, lest those about her should suppose the consciousness of detected, guilty thoughts had overcome her—it was more than she could bear.—“I’m ill. O, take me away,” she cried in an imploring tone. Frank came eagerly forward. “Not you, not you,” she said impatiently, waving him back, while Paul supported her in his arms, his eyes resting on her pale, sorrowful countenance.

“Where’s my child,” cried her father, rushing forward, as Paul was bearing her to their carriage.

“Safe, with her husband,” answered Paul, in a steady but gentle voice. The old gentleman looked up at him, and saw a tear in his large, dark eye. Taking out his cloak, Paul wrapt it carefully about Esther, and placed her in the carriage.

“Will you go with us, Sir?” said Paul, respectfully. Mr. Waring put his foot upon the

step.—“I had better not,” thought he, and drew back. Esther observed her father’s hesitation; and putting out her hand to him, said, with a forced smile, “I shall be quite well presently. Good night, Sir.”

She sat silent, as they drove homeward. She had not conjectured what were Paul’s thoughts. It was humbling enough to her, that her husband should have heard such gross insinuations against her, and should have looked as if some impropriety or trifling in her conduct, had laid her open to the slants of the malignant. “He it is that is insulted,” thought she; “and it is I who subjected him to it, and left no way of revenge to his proud spirit.”—She looked timidly at him. He was leaning bareheaded out of the carriage window. There was no longer any anger in his countenance, but it told of heart-sickening melancholy, and pity for the faults of those we love.—“Paul,” she said, but could not go on. He appeared not to notice her; but after a while, asked—still looking on the trees playing in the breeze and moonshine—“what were you about saying, Esther?”

“Nothing, nothing, only that I fear the change to this damp air may be dangerous to you.”

“Never fear that, there’s a fever here,” said he, striking his forehead rapidly with his fingers, “that must be cooled quickly, or ’twill sear the brain.”

They drove on, Paul sitting as before.—“Have ye no sense of your glad motions?” said he, as he still looked out on the trees. “Can ye be so innocent and look so gay, and yet feel no joy? Sure, you have your delights unto you, and the morning sun shall take you in them fresher than when he left you. Blessed creations of a kind Father, ye know not sin nor sorrow; but man lies down and rises to them both.”—Esther could bear this no longer,—“My husband,” she sobbed out, as she sunk upon his bosom, “O, take me to you, and bless me with them; for I too am innocent, though not as pure as they are.”—He folded her in his arms as tenderly as a father would a lost child returned, and she felt a tear drop on her forehead.

“You need rest, my love,” said he, kindly, as he led her into the house. She turned and looked at him.

“There is no rest for me, Paul, when I have broken yours, though I never meant it.”

“The whirlwind has gone over. You see me calm now.”

“Calm and fond, but not happy, Paul. I never thought to live to grieve you.”

“Our griefs are mostly our own creations, Esther ; and so may mine be. I’ll call myself to ’count for them, while you go sleep. To-morrow all will be well. Good night.”

“Innocent, though not as pure as they are,” repeated he to himself, as he walked the room. “Said she not so ? As yet she has sinned in mind only.—Body and soul not both bound over to hell yet,” he cried, stamping his foot in agony.—“Remorse, or fear, or I know not what, holds her still. Did she not wave him back as if she dared not trust herself ? And speaks not that conceived guilt ? And did they not twit her of it,—all of them to hear it, and I, her husband, standing by ? And when she saw me, O, she confessed it all, all.—Down, down, ye thoughts, that rise like fiends within me—tempt me not—drive me not mad !” He rushed wildly from the room, as if pursued by spectres.

As he hurried through the passage to his study, his foot caught in the rug on which Abel was sleeping. He started back as if the powers of

darkness had crossed him in his flight.—“Have ye snared me then? Is there no way left me?” Abel lay with his limbs drawn up, and the muscles of his face distorted, as if some sharp pain wrung him. Every now and then his mouth drew convulsively, and he uttered broken, weak cries, as if he dreamed some one was tormenting him. As Paul looked on his shrunk-en body and ghastly face, it seemed like the carcass of some wretch that had pined away miserably to death, and that some imp had entered it as his place of sin and torment.—“Sent to make me a victim cursed and abhorred as yourself. I see it all, and yet you cling to me, that I cannot shake you off.” He raised his lamp to get a more distinct view of the object before him. The light flashed upon Abel. As he opened his eyes upon Paul, he gave a long shrill cry, hiding his face in his hands.—“Not yet, not yet,” begged he, twisting himself round, till on his knees. “One more day, before you take me with you. The deed’s not done yet; I cannot go till that’s, that’s done.”

“And has the soul’s working so changed the visage, that he does not know me? Is my fate writ with a mark like Cain’s upon me?—

Rouse you," said Paul. "Whom do you take me for?"—At the sound of Paul's voice, Abel curled down upon the floor.

"I thought He had come for me," cried Abel; "for They've told me He would come; and yet it could not be now; for They have been whispering me all night long that I must do it before I went."

"It?—What?" asked Paul impetuously. "Art mad?"

"I cannot tell you. Something dreadful, that I'm afraid to do; and yet it must be done,—and then I'm lost," he screamed.

"And quickly," said Paul, "for you're about it now, though you know it not. You're here,—within me. Dar'st look on him you're blasting?"

"I'm gone, I'm gone," shrieked Abel, clinging to Paul's feet. "Help me, save me!"—A loathing hate entered Paul. His teeth set, and his foot drew up as if he would have crushed the boy. Abel's hold relaxed, and he lay panting and exhausted. Paul watched him till his breathing became freer.—"Up, and follow me. I'll know the worst that waits me."

Violent passions and dreadful thoughts had now obtained such complete mastery over Paul, that they came and went like powers independent of his will; and he felt himself as a creature lying wholly at their mercy. He prayed to them to spare him, as if they had been spiritual beings that could enter him and move about him and torment him, as they would. They took shadowy forms and wild motions, becoming dimly visible to his mind's eye.—“If I'm lost,” cried he, madly, as he left the house, “if ye have made me a child of hell, speak to me and tell me of it. If cursed deeds must be done of me, whip me not blind and bound to my work, but let me know it all, and what I am, that I may put my heart into the act, and share your devilish triumph.”

Paul pressed on so fast, that Abel, with his shambling gate, could hardly keep up with him. The eastern horizon was shut in; and when they came in sight of the rocky ridge, the moon, which was just setting, threw its light over the multitude of its grayish broken points, giving to its whole length the white lustre of the milky way.

"It seems the path of Heaven," said Paul to himself, as his eye glanced over it, "but it tends not thither. The whole earth's a cheat, and I!—I'm its dupe. Yet, I'll be fooled no longer. Yes,—and they take angels' shapes.—She that looks as if made to be an inhabitant of the pure, holy stars, why she—she that looks all innocence in her sleep,—for then they feign too—whom and what dreams she of now? And she'll wake presently, and talk to her pillow, and give it his name, and fold it in her arms as she does me, me,—and fancy it him.—Tell me, tell me, ye that haunt me, is it not so? Can ye not give me to look into her very soul, and see its secret workings, as ye see mine?"—Abel trembled from head to foot as he watched Paul's motions, and heard his terrific voice, without knowing what he spoke of.

The moon was down and sky overcast when they reached the rocks. Though Paul's walks of late had lain in this direction, he was not enough acquainted with the passage to find his way through it in the dark. Abel, who had traversed it often in the night, alone and in terror, now took heart at having some one with him at such an hour, and offered, hesitatingly, to

lead.—“The boy winds round these crags with the speed and ease of a stream,” said Paul.—“Not so fast, Abel.”

“Take hold of the root which shoots out over your head, Sir, for ’tis ticklish work getting along just here.—Do you feel it, Sir?”

“I have hold,” said Paul.

“Let yourself gently down by it, Sir. You needn’t be a bit afraid, for ’twill not give way; man couldn’t have fastened it stronger.”

This was the first time Abel had been of consequence to any one, or felt his power, since the boys had turned him out from their games; and it gave him a momentary activity, and an unsettled sort of spirit which he had never known since then. He had been shunned and abhorred; and he believed himself the victim of some Demoniac Power. To have another in this fearful bondage with him, as Paul had intimated, was a relief from his dreadful solitariness in his terrors and sufferings.—“And he said that it was I who was to work a curse on him,” muttered Abel. “It cannot be, surely, that such a thing as I am can harm a man like him!”—And though Abel remembered Paul’s kindness, and that this was to seal his own doom, it stirred the spirit of

pride within him.—“What are you muttering to yourself, there, in the dark;” demanded Paul, “or whom talk you with, you withered wretch?”—Abel shook in every joint at the sound of Paul’s harsh voice.

“It is so dreadfully still here,” said Abel, “I hear nothing but your steps behind me; and they make me start.”—This was true; for with his touch of instant pride, his terrors, and his fears of Paul were as great as ever.

“Speak louder then,” said Paul, “or hold you peace. I like not your muttering—it bodes no good.”

“It may bring a curse to you, worse than that on me, if a worse can be,” said Abel to himself; “but who can help it?”

Day broke before they cleared the ridge; a drizzling rain came on; and the wind, beginning to rise, drove through the crevices in the rocks with sharp, whistling sounds which seemed to come from the malignant spirits of the air.

They had scarcely entered the wood, when the storm became furious; and the trees, swaying and beating with their branches against one another, appeared possessed of a supernatural madness, and engaged in wild conflict, as if

there were life and passion in them ; and their broken, decayed arms groaned like things in torment. The terror of these sights and sounds was too much for poor Abel ; it nearly crazed him ; and he set up a shriek that seemed for a moment to still the storm. It startled Paul, and when he looked at him, the boy's face was of a ghostly whiteness. The rain had drenched him to the skin, his clothes clung to his lean body, that shook as if it would fall apart, his eyes flew wildly, and teeth chattered against each other. The fears and torture of his mind gave something unearthly to his look, that made Paul start back.—“ Abel—boy—fiend—speak ! What has seized on you ? ”

“ They told me so,” cried Abel—“ I've done it—I led the way for you—they're coming, they're coming—we're lost.”

“ Peace, fool,” said Paul, trying to shake off the power he felt Abel gaining over him, “ and find us a shelter if you can.”

“ There's only the hut,” said Abel, “ and I wouldn't go into that if it rained fire.”

“ And why not ? ”

“ I once felt that it was for me to go, and I went so near as to see in at the door-way. And

I saw something in the hut—it was not a man, for it flitted by the opening just like a shadow; and I heard two muttering something to one another; it wasn't like other sounds, for as soon as I heard it, it made me stop my ears. I couldn't stay any longer, and I ran till I cleared the wood.—O! 'tis His biding place, when He comes hither.”

“And is it His own building?” asked Paul, forcing a laugh.

“No;” answered Abel, “’twas built by the two wood-cutters; and one of them came to a bloody end; and they say the other died the same night, foaming at the mouth like one possessed.—There it is,” said he, almost breathless, as he crouched down, and pointed at the hut under the trees.—“Do not go, Sir,” he said, catching hold of the skirts of Paul’s coat,—“I’ve never dared go nigher since.”—“Let loose, boy,” cried Paul, striking Abel’s hand from his coat, “I’ll not be fooled with.”—Abel, alarmed at being left alone, crawled after Paul, as far as he dared go; then taking hold of him, made a supplicating motion to him to stop; he was afraid to speak. Paul pushed on without regarding him.

The hut stood on the edge of a sand-bank that was kept up by a large pine, whose roots and fibres, lying partly bare, looked like some giant spider that had half buried himself in the sand. On the right of the hut was a patch of broken ground, in which was still standing a few straggling, dried stalks of indian corn ; and from two dead trees hung knotted pieces of broken line, which had formerly served for a clothes-line. The hut was built of half-trimmed trunks of small trees laid on each other, crossing at the four corners, and running out at unequal lengths, the crevices filled in with sods and moss. The door, which lay on the floor, was of twisted boughs ; and the roof, of the same, had caved in, and but partly kept out the sun and rain.

As Paul drew near the entrance, he stopped, though the wind just then came in a heavy gust, and the rain fell like a flood. It was not a dread of what he might see within ; but it seemed to him, that there was a spell round him, drawing him nearer and nearer to its centre ; and he felt the hand of some invisible power upon him. As he stepped into the hut, a chill ran over him, and his eyes shut involuntarily. Abel watched him eagerly ; and as he saw him

enter, tossed his arms wildly, shouting, "gone, gone. They'll have me, too—they're coming, they're coming"—and threw himself, on his face, to the ground.

Driven from home by his maddening passions, a perverse delight in self-torture had taken possession of Paul; his mind craved more intense excitement, and longed to prove true all that its jealousy and superstition had imaged to it. He had walked on, lost in this fearful riot, but with no particular object in view, and taking only a kind of crazed joy in his bewildered state. Esther's love for him, which he at times thought past doubt, feigned—the darkness of the night—and then the driving storm, with all its confused motions and sounds, made an uproar of the mind which drove out all settled purpose or thought.

The stillness of the place into which he had now entered, where was heard nothing but the slow, regular dripping of the rain from the broken roof, upon the hard trod floor; the lowered and distant sound of the storm without; the sudden change from the whirl and swaying of the trees, to the steady walls of the building, put a sudden stop to the violent working of his brain, and he gradually fell into a stupor.

When Abel began to recover, he could scarcely raise himself from the ground. He looked round, but could see nothing of Paul.—“They’ve bound us together,” said he; “and something is drawing me towards him. There is no help for me; I must go whither he goes.”—As he was drawn nearer and nearer to the hut, he seemed to struggle and hang back, as if pushed on against his will. At last he reached the door-way; and clinging to its side, with a desperate hold, as if not to be forced in, put his head forward a little, casting a hasty glance into the building.—“There he is, and alive!” breathed out Abel.

Paul’s stupor was now beginning to leave him; his recollection was returning; and what had passed, came slowly and at intervals. There was something he had said to Esther before leaving home—he could not tell what; then his gazing after her as she drove from the house; then something of Abel; and he sprang from the ground as if he felt the boy’s touch again about his knees; then the ball-room—and there seemed to be a multitude of voices, and all talking of his wife. Suddenly she appeared shooting by him through the air—and Frank was there. Then came his own agony and tortures again: All

returned upon him in the confusion of some horrible trance. On a sudden, the hut seemed to enlarge, and the walls to rock ; and shadows of those he knew, and of terrible beings he had never seen, were flying round him, and mocking at him. His own substantial form seemed to him undergoing a change, and taking the shape and substance of the accursed ones he looked at. As he felt the change going on, he tried to utter a cry, but he could not make a sound, nor move a limb. The ground under him rocked and pitched ; it grew darker and darker, till every thing was visionary, and he thought himself surrounded by spirits, and in the mansions of the damned. Something like a deep, black cloud began to gather gradually round him. The gigantic structure, with its tall, terrific arches turned slowly into darkness, and the spirits within disappeared one after another, till, as the ends of the cloud met and closed, he saw the last looking at him with an infernal laugh in his undefined visage.

Abel continued watching him in speechless agony. Paul's consciousness was now leaving him ; his head began to swim—he reeled ; and as his hand swept down the side of the building,

as he was trying to save himself, it struck against a rusty knife that had been left sticking loosely between the logs.—“Let go, let go!” shrieked Abel, “there’s blood on’t—’tis cursed, ’tis cursed.”—As Paul swung round, with the knife in his hand, Abel sprang from the door with a shrill cry, and Paul sank on the floor, muttering to himself, “what said They?”

When he began to come to a little, he was still sitting on the ground, his back against the wall. His senses were yet confused. His wife seemed near him, and he thought he saw a bloody knife by his side. After sitting a little longer his mind grew gradually clearer, and at last he felt, for the first time, that his hand held something. As his eye fell on it, and he saw distinctly what it was, he leaped upright with a savage yell, and dashed the knife from him as if it had been an asp stinging him. He stood with his bloodshot eyes fastened on it, his hands spread, and his body shrunk up with horror.—“Forged in Hell! And for me, for me!” he screamed, as he sprang forward and seized it with a convulsed grasp.—“Damned pledge of the league that binds us!” he cried, holding it up and glaring wildly on it. “And yet a voice did

warn me,—of what, I know not.—Which of ye put it in this hand?—Speak—let me look on you?—D’ye hear me, and will not answer?—Nay, nay, what needs it? This tells me, though it speaks not. I know your promptings now,” he said, folding his arms deliberately; “your work must be done, and I am doomed to it.”

There was an awful calmness in his voice and bearing as he stood. His mind at last rolled back upon the past. As the thought of Esther’s love for Frank crossed him, he grasped the knife hard.—Then he heard her call out, “Paul!” And she looked all truth and fondness. “O! hang with your arms about my neck thus, Esther, and I’ll never again doubt you.—Stand off a little. Is not my eye murderous?—Have a care; touch not this bloody hand.—Come to me, my wife; I’ll not believe it, ’tis false, they lie, all lie, all! O, spare me, spare me,” he groaned out, throwing himself down and beating the ground madly with his arms. “Let her die, if ye’ve ordained it so, but not by me, not by me.”—His limbs gradually relaxed, and he lay silent. The fit of agony had passed. He rose slowly up, putting the knife into his bosom. “’Tis all in vain. I yield me to you; be it when you will.”

He quitted the hut. The storm had passed over ; and as he stood with folded arms before the door-way, he saw the sun playing in chequered spots under the trees ; and the myriads of silver rain-drops, falling, or quivering on the leaves, dazzled his sight.—“ ’Twas Your accursed power that raised the storm and whirlwind, when you made a man a child of hell ; your work is done, and now they’re laid again.”—He turned his melancholy eye upward. The clouds lay white as snow-drifts along the air, setting off and deepening the clear blue sky.—“ Ye bright messengers from another world,” he said in a deep sunk voice, “ ye bring not glad tidings to me now, as once ye did ; your holy influences no more fall on me. Ye pass me by in silence ; yet once ye had a voice for me. Ye go to tell of hope, and speak holy promises to the pure in heart. Sin holds no communion with ye. Once all this beauty had been deep joy to me ; but now it lies upon the eye, but enters not this bosom.—No, no, another sense is here now, and other sights. Tormenting flames, like those I’m soon to go to, shoot up, and burn me—burn me. And this narrow body seems like a dark, deep cavern. And the eye turns inward, and

what sees it there? Spirits, uncouth things, sporting and fighting there. Yes, 'tis like the place Ye just now took me to, when ye made me yours, and put upon me this deed of horror.—Let me do it quickly, quickly. Make me not walk longer in all this brightness, a fiend of darkness—hide me from it, and I'll, I'll come to you.”

Soon he became calm again. The look of despair passed off, and a mysterious gloom, and a fixed and dreadful purpose seemed to settle on him. He walked forward. As he drew near Abel, who was sitting where Paul left him, the boy quaked and looked aghast at him, as at one who had just risen out of the abode of evil spirits. And well he might, for there was a visionary horror, mingled with desperate resoluteness in his face, which would have startled a firm man who saw him then for the first time. He turned his dark eye slowly down on Abel, without speaking, and then moved on. The boy felt as if all strength went out of him. He got up with difficulty, and followed Paul with a watchful look, and at a greater distance than usual. He could scarcely draw his breath; and when Paul's pace slackened a little, now and then, as he was lost in thought, Abel would stand stock still, fearing to be any nearer.

When they at last reached the top of the ridge, Paul stopped and looked down upon the fields and houses which lay beyond it. Abel retreated a little, yet dared not fly. At length Paul turned on him. He shrunk back, and tried to look another way; but his eye seemed drawn back and fastened upon Paul's by some magical power. He writhed, and twisted, and clasped his hands, and looked in Paul's face, as if imploring to be spared. Still he drew nearer and nearer, as if a snake's eye charmed him, till he stood close to Paul's side.—“Think you, Abel,” said Paul at last, raising his arm and pointing towards the houses, “that the storm was up in that cursed place only, or that it drove yonder?—To hear Paul speak once more was like returning life to Abel.—“I'm afraid,” said he, catching his breath; “I'm afraid—but I can't guess;—and I shall never know,” he added, tears trickling through his downcast lashes, “for not a soul that I should ask would ever tell me.—No one speaks to Abel but you. May be they had better not, for I might be made to harm them, too.—O, save me from it,” he cried, falling on his knees before Paul, “you fed me, and spoke to me. O, I would die sooner.”

“’Tis done already,” answered Paul, in a deep, firm tone. “Your work is done, and mine is doomed to me. There’s no escape.” Abel fell, like one dead, at Paul’s feet.—“Poor wretch,” said Paul to himself, looking down upon him. “The instrument of my doom too, and yet I would not curse you. Twinned with me in misery, and bound to crime by chains that can’t be broken, I’ll feel a fellow’s kindness for you while we’re here.—What’s to come beyond, I know not.—And do You not only take us in our vices? Are babes and innocents all, all swept into your toils?”

He stooped down, and raising Abel, set him with his back resting against a rock. The boy opened his eyes and looked round him, as if not knowing where he was. Paul spoke kindly to him; and when he had a little more recovered, bade him take comfort, and then went back to get some water for him. He reached the place; and tearing some hairy moss from the rock the water trickled over, soaked it in one of the little hollows, and carried it in the palms of his hands. When Abel saw it, he gave an hysteric laugh; and seizing it, sucked it greedily through his long teeth.

"Can you walk now, Abel?" asked Paul, at length.

"I'm quite well again," answered he, looking up at Paul, as if to thank him.

When they had reached the clump of locusts, Paul said to him, "You must leave me now. You must be faint for want of food;" and he gave Abel a piece of money. Abel looked at the money, and then at Paul.—"And what good will this do me?" asked Paul. "Nobody will sell to me."

"Not sell to you, foolish boy!" said Paul, scoffingly. "Why, that buys souls daily! Men and women sell themselves to one another for that, and swear before God 'tis all for love. Did you go to them, child, tailed and clawed like the Devil himself, they'd feed you for that, though 'twould be your last hour else."—Abel seemed comforted at this; and putting the money into his pocket, as he thanked Paul, took his way to the village. Paul followed the path that led home.

When he turned a little wood, and the house appeared in sight, he stopped suddenly. A sense of guilt and fear checked him; and it was some time before he had resolution enough to go for-

ward.—“What! shall I be driven from my own door like a beast of prey! They know me not, nor the work I am ordained to. Why does my very own make me tremble thus?”

It was a warm sunshiny noon when he reached the house, and there was that stillness round, which, in the country, sometimes pervades all nature like a diffused spiritual presence. Paul felt as if this brightness and quiet betrayed him. Every thing he passed by seemed to have a knowledge of him, and strange eyes were on him. He hardly dared look round. He looked up at his wife's windows. The shutters were closed,—“Sleeps yet,” said he. “That is well;” and he entered the house with more composure.

He went with a cautious step to his own room, and locked himself in. As he passed near his glass, he started back, as if some evil spirit appeared to him.—“Have they not only changed my soul,” cried he, “but transformed this body, too, that the world may know, and shun me? Is the deed writ here—here on this forehead, that men may read it when they look on me?—I'll not live on, the dread and mock of mortals. Now I'll do it, now, while she sleeps, and end it.—Then take me to you, fit for the hell I go

to.”—His eyes gleamed fire as he clinched the knife in his raised hand, as if about to give the blow. At the sight of himself again, he dropped the knife and covered his eyes with his hands.—“Take, take that vision from me, that tells me what I am, and shall be! O, show me not myself, cursed and fallen! I’ll do it; but blind me to the sense of what I am and must be.” He had undergone too much to bear it longer, and sinking into a chair, his limbs relaxed, his eyes soon grew heavy, and he fell into a deep sleep.

Esther waked refreshed; for Paul’s affectionate tones and kind manner when she left him quieted her spirit. When she inquired for her husband, the servant said he saw him enter the house, and believed he was in his room. Esther went to the door and knocked gently; there was no answer. She tried to open it, but it was locked. She called out, “Paul!”—“Is the hour come?” cried he, starting out of his sleep.—“I’m ready then;” and putting his hand to his bosom, the knife was gone.—“Where have I been?” said he to himself, looking round,—“Was’t all a dream? Was there then no instrument of murder given me? And is there no deed of death on my hands?—She’s not to die.

then, and I am free of them !” cried he with a shout.

“ Paul ! Paul !” called out Esther, terrified at the sound, “ let me come to you.”

“ Yes, yes, and safely you may come. I’ll not harm you, upon my life, I’ll not harm you,” he said partly to himself, and moving towards the door. As he advanced, his eye fell on the knife, as it lay on the floor. His blood ran cold, and a sick feeling came over him. Then his sight and all sense left him. Esther listened ; but all was still.—“ He’s dead, he’s dead,” shrieked she, trying to force the door. The noise brought him to himself.—“ Hush ! hush !” said he, in a low tone, as he picked up the knife with a shaking hand, and concealed it in his bosom, “ let there be no noise.”—He stepped slowly and softly to the door, and opened it cautiously. He raised his finger in sign of silence.—“ Hush !” he whispered, “ or you’ll rouse them. Do not tremble so at me. There is no danger yet ; the hour is not come.”

Esther entered the room. As Paul took her hand, she felt his cold and damp. “ Paul, my husband,” said she, as soon as she could speak, “ what is it ? Why do you look so wild and

lost? Rouse yourself; tell me what has happened."

"Happened," repeated he, unconsciously. He stood a little while silent and abstracted. "Did you ask what had happened?"—Then putting his mouth close to her ear and whispering eagerly—"To hear it would be your last. What's seen in the spirit, cannot be spoken to flesh and blood."—She shuddered, for there was something unearthly in his voice.

"Merciful Heaven," cried she, looking upward, "save him, save him; let him not go mad. Do with me as thou wilt, but spare my husband."—Her prayer passed through Paul's dark and troubled mind like the light.

"Is there yet a Heavenly Power? And are there holy angels to guard us still? The fiends have not all then, and their domain fills not the whole air! No, 'tis not all dark; there's light beyond. See there, Esther," said he, seizing her arm, as he pointed eagerly upward; "there are bright forms, dazzling bright, moving in it. Can'st see them?" He looked as if more than mortal vision was given to him. The sense of all about him was gone, and he went on talking to himself, as he gazed. "There they are,

passing away, till buried in the very brightness ! Now they come again, hosts, myriads, and with speed of fire !—The darkness, and the evil ones, too, are flying—they are gone ! Now the light gushes ! 'Tis all, all one flood of glory round me ; I'm safe, I'm safe, Esther !" he gasped out as he fell on her neck.

"O, my wretched, lost husband !" she cried, as she folded her arms round him, and looked upward with streaming eyes, "Is there no help for you ? Will not Heaven have pity on you ?"—Paul remained silent and motionless. "O, speak to me, be it but one word," said she, raising him gently. "Look at me, will you not, Paul ?" He did look, but it was as upon one he did not know.—"Why do you stare at me so ? Do you not know me, Paul,—Esther,—your wife ?"

"I think—I remember something—Yes, 'tis all clear now. But they have not betrayed me to you ? They've not told you what's to be done ? Believe them not, they belie me. Did I not just now tell you I was safe ?—and then no harm, you know, can come to you."

"Harm ! Safe ! What mean you ? Do not keep me in fearful ignorance. By the love you bear me, tell me what it is that shakes your reason so."

“That must not now be. I serve the powers of the air. When you’re a spirit in Heaven, and I in darkness, you’ll know all.—There! they flit, like shadows, in the light, and keep the sun from me; yet you are in it. That tokens what is to be.”

He paused. His wildness left him, and he seemed to be musing. At last he spoke.—“The hour is coming, Esther—it breathes upon me now, when death will part us, and we shall never meet more through all eternity. Thy immortal countenance will then be radiant with holy joy; but I shall no more look on it; and thy voice of love will no more sound for me.—Weep not for me; it can avail me nothing; the doom is on me. Nay, nay, ask me not what I mean. The book in which my fate is written, is sealed to you; you may not read it.—I must be alone awhile,” said he, opening the door. “Do not linger so. The time is coming when you would fain fly from me, and may not.—No more tears, Esther,” he said, taking her hands in his, as she looked up silently in his face. “What is this world’s misery to those who hope for rest beyond it?” He pressed his lips to her forehead, and, turning back, shut the door after her.

When Abel came to the village street he walked through it with more confidence than he had done for many a day ; for he remembered Paul's last words to him, and felt as if he had that in his pocket which would find him friends again. When he reached the shop door, where he intended buying something to eat, it was near noon, and the little room was filled with the wise ones who had come together to take their dram, and settle church and state. He stopped at the door and looked anxiously in, beginning to feel for his money ; for he no more expected to gain admittance without it here, than one does to a show. He stepped upon the door-stone, and began playing his change from one hand to the other, looking first at it, and then at the shopkeeper.

"Where got you those white boys, you starvling?" asked the man. "Come in and let me take a peep at them. Is't honest money?"

"I came honestly by it," said Abel, trembling, and venturing a little within the door.

"That's no concern of mine," said the man. "And many a glass of liquor, I should miss the selling of, gentlemen, if none but fair gains bought it."

“Who have you here?” said one, setting down his mug, which had just touched his lips, and moving off, as Abel sidled up to the counter.—“Why, ’tis the curst boy! You’ll not take his money, Sam!”

“Will I not?” replied Sam. “Hand over the bit, and tell us what you want. I hold man or boy, who has money in his purse, to be every inch a gentleman.”—Sam’s customers began to draw back. As some were going out at the door, he called after them.—“Stay,” said he, throwing the piece on the counter, “and hear it ring. There’s music for you, my lads, sweeter than a church bell.”

“Don’t take it, Sam,” said the customer. “He’s sent, and it will fare ill with you if you have dealings with him.”

“Not take it! Why, you would rig him up out of your cabbagings, fit to be the Old One’s harlequin, for another such piece as this,” said Sam, letting it drop through the hole in the counter, into the drawer.—“There, didn’t you hear them welcome him, the bright lads! What care I whose coining it is? The Devil may have his mint, if he chooses, and at little cost too. Who think ye, but he, set the wheels of that coach

agoing? And she within it, looking so smiling and innocent, sold herself to one as old as Satan, though, to my mind, not so handsome or proper a gentleman.—'Tis the way of the world, and I'll not be singular! Bread, did you say my pretty youth? There it is; but have a care that it doesn't poison you, for the Devil is the father of cheats, and his children had the making on't." —Abel looked pleased as he took it. "There's a sweet smile. Call again, my lad, but at another hour, for these gentlemen have no great liking to you, and you may stop the running of my tap."

"I'll never take change of you again," said the tailor, as he left the shop, "till that drawer's empty; for I would as soon handle iron at white heat as touch that piece."—Sam laughed heartily, and called out to Abel as he crawled from the shop, "give my compliments to your master, boy, and tell him, that I should be happy to supply him, or any of his likely family."—Abel bent his way towards the house of his protector, and took a seat under the hedge, waiting his coming.

When Paul was once more alone, his last mournful and serious words to Esther still

sounded in his ears. Her prayer for him (of which he heard something, as in a dream) as she folded her protecting arms round him, the home and shelter he felt her to be to him when he fell on her neck and cried out that he was safe, the expression of woe, and pity, and love with which she looked up in his face at leaving him, came all at once to his mind with a clear and calming influence. He felt the spring of blood once more at his heart, and his old affections flowed through him again with a living warmth. The passions that had raged in him like fire, went suddenly out; the horrors that had whirled round him and crazed his brain passed swiftly off; he felt again the earth firm under him, and saw that he stood in the cheerful light that fell like a blessing upon all things that lay in the beautiful and assured tranquillity of nature. It was like coming out of one of those terrific dreams, in which we have passed through multitudes of horrid sights and dangers, and finding it bright morning, and all as safe and quiet as it was yesterday. The mere returning of the simple sense of reality brought tears of joy and thankfulness to his eyes.—“Am I again amongst the abodes of men,” said he, “and standing amidst the works

of God? Are light, and truth, and beauty once more round me? And were all the horrors I have passed through, a conjuration and a lie raised to damn me? Come, and assure me of it, Esther; for though thou walkest with me here, thou seemest to me kindred with higher beings. O, I have gazed upon thee, till thy rapt looks and joyous and beautiful motions have made me think thee an imbodied Spirit, revealing to me the creations that fill the world beyond us—a fair and passing vision, returning to the world, which, for a while, thou camest from.—Let me go to thee,” said he, rushing from his room, with eager delight, “and have thine eye rest on mine, and hear thy clear voice, and listen while you tell me you will not yet go from me.”

Esther was lying on a sofa, her full dark hair hanging over her face and snow-white arm, on which her forehead rested.—“My wife,” said Paul, as he kneeled down by her, “have I lived only to afflict you? I could throw away my life and count it nothing, to bring you peace. I should have been the soother of all your sorrows, and made your little daily joys; and is it I who

have broken your heart, and made life comfortless to you ?”

Esther sobbed audibly.—“No answer for me, Esther ? Then it is so. Why do I ask ? And yet a vain wish is struggling within me that you might say something to quiet a self-accusing mind. My will is not in my act ; but when I wound your heart, mine bleeds doubly.”

“I do believe it, Paul,” said she, raising herself, and resting on him. “I have not lost your love yet ; but dear as it has ever been to me, it is of small worth without your confidence. It cannot content me unless I feel, as it were, our hearts’ blood mingling and flowing on warm together. To be loved as I would be, we must have one life, one being ; our sorrows must no more part us than our joys. But you have troubles of the mind, and shut me out, like a stranger, from them ; and dreadful thoughts o’er-master you, and fatal purposes, to which you seem driven ; and vain surmises and dark givings-out are all I know of them. Is this love, Paul ? Is it all your heart asks for ? And can it be in your noble nature, to give only the poor remnant of your mind and heart to her whose whole soul would alone content you ?—Yet this is

nothing," she cried, hiding her face. "Those eyes which had ever but one look for me, last night were turned in anger and with a searching sternness on me.—Last night was it? Fears and grief have made it seem an age since. This I did not deserve, Paul, however too poor a thing I may be for a mind, of a reach like yours, to rest on."

"Your words go like swords through me. Do not break down this overburdened spirit with your just complainings, Esther. I would not be what I am. Think you it is in my disposition to torture and afflict you as I have done?—Look up, my love, and tell me if I'm not changed. There is an inward peace here, which I never felt till now. I've been out of the world—out of myself; and this naked soul has driven through fire and whirlwinds; but it has come back to its place of rest, to its quiet trust in thee, and the repose of thy full love. Could I look on this face, and—let me not name it. Is not this eye open as the day? And do I not read truth written on this brow? When I first saw you, Esther, you seemed made up of sensations more exquisite than other mortals knew how to think of, as if of a nature between us and angels, and

moulded to live a perpetual self-delight. And when you touched a flower or took its perfume, I thought of the light and breeze, which shone with its beauty and was filled with its odour. You seemed to me too joyous and pure ever to have felt our passions or known our sins. And when I have sat by you, as I do now, with the soft touch of your hand in mine, and your eyes resting fondly on mine, I have felt as if undergoing a gentle change, and becoming a nature like unto yours; it was to me such as I have thought would be the intercourse of mortals when these bodies become incorruptible and glorified in another world.—Why should I try to tell what I now feel? It is a vain thing. Let me be still, while my senses are drinking in delight.”

Esther hung over him, and tears of joy filled her eyes. One fell on Paul’s forehead. She wiped it gently away, and then touched her lips where it fell.

“Take them not away yet, Esther,” he murmured, “they are the seal of pardon for my wrongs to you, the pledge of your enduring love for me, the promise of unchanging joy through life, a joy that is to purify me, and fit me to live

on with you through eternity.”—His voice faltered, and she, too, saw a tear trickle from under his closed lids.

“O, I could have lived ages of misery, for an hour like this, Paul, were life to end when that hour had run out; but I feel that years are in store for us, blissful as our souls can bear?”

“I hardly dared look up,” said he, “till I heard your voice, lest, waking, I should find it a heavenly trance I had been rapt in. Come, let me rouse myself and make sure that all is real,” he said, putting his arm round her, as he rose and walked with her to the window.

“How fresh and new all things look; or rather, how like it is to our return to old and remembered places where nature still looks young and healthful though we are growing old. But *we* are not growing old, Esther, for life is again beginning in us. Is it a new creation, or are other senses given me with which to see and feel it? The boughs swing up, and leaves play as cheerfully as if a breeze, for which they had drooped and waited, had just blown on them, and the declining sun lights up all things gloriously. What a glow it sends over that hedge,” said he, as his eye passed along it.—“Hide me! Again

he's come—he follows me!" cried Paul, turning terror-struck from the window. Esther looked at him. His face was wild and ghastly, and he tottered as he threw himself on her shoulders for support.

"Speak, speak, Paul,—who—what is it—where?"

"There! there! do you not see him?" he uttered in a hard-breathed whisper, and pointing back with his finger, without daring to look round.

"That boy?" asked Esther, trembling, "I've seen him before. Who, and what is he, that looks so like a tormented thing thrown out upon the earth to pain and mischief?"

"Speak not of him—power is given him. I feel him on me now," he screached as he sprang with an enormous leap from her.—"Off! off!" he cried, struggling as if to loose himself from some strong grasp.—"They call me,—thousands of voices in my ears. Hear them, hear them, Esther!—I come! I come!" he yelled out madly, darting from the room, his hair on end, his spread hands and arms stretched out before him.—Esther tried to call to him, as she ran towards him. Her lips moved, but there was no sound, and she fell to the floor.

The shouts and cry alarmed the servants, who rushed into the room. They raised Esther, and laid her on the sofa. She gasped once or twice ; her eyes opened, then closed again. At last the colour came to her cheek, and starting up and staring round her :—" My husband," she called out. " Where is he ? Fly, seek him !"

" Which way has he gone, madam ?"

" I know not. Bring him, on your lives, bring him to me !" She rose and hurried towards the outer door.

" Stay, dear madam," said her waiting woman. " Whither are you going at this hour ?"

" Going to my husband, if he is on the earth—or to my grave."

" Do not leave the house bareheaded, and looking so crazed, madam."

" Well, well, bring me something, quickly." The woman returned, and was about following Esther.—" Stay here," said she, " he may return while I am gone, and miss me. I can go alone," she murmured, as she left the door. " When Paul leaves me, what has the earth for me to fear or care for ?"—She took her way to a large, intricate wood which lay off at a distance from the house, and bordering part of the rocky ridge.

Soon after Esther left the house, Frank called to see her. The woman told all she knew.—“Gone out, and alone, and in such a state of mind! Which way?”—“Towards the wood you see yonder, Sir.” Frank left the house in pursuit of her. He was alarmed for her, for he feared Paul, though he knew not why. He entered the wood, and wandered through it a long time without seeing her. The light was growing fainter and fainter, and he became more uneasy. At last he found her leaning against a tree, pale and still. He went up to her, and spoke kindly. She seemed not to regard what he said, but asked, without looking up, “is he no where to be found?”—“Search is making,” replied Frank. “Let me help you home, for you are exhausted; and you can be of no service here.”—She put her arm within his, and walked on slowly, trembling from weakness and her fears. Her tears fell fast; for Frank’s friendly and gentle manner to her in her desolate sorrow, touched her heart.

When Paul left the house, his mind was so hurried and confused from the sudden shock and change he had undergone, that he missed the passage across the ridge, and continued wan-

dering along over and between the broken clefts, till at last he came upon the wood to which Esther had gone. He was pushing swiftly through it, when he suddenly caught sight of Frank and Esther, at a distance. He sprang forward, once, with the leap of a tiger, then stood still. Every passion within him seemed suddenly struck dead, and the mind appeared collecting itself for something fatal; all was gloomy and hushed. When he followed them, it was slowly and with a cautious step, as if he feared his tread would be heard. He kept at a distance, without losing sight of them, till they left the wood; then stood concealed at the edge of it, watching them as they went towards the house.

Esther's strength gradually returned; and she no longer needed the support of Frank's arm. As Paul saw her draw her arm from Frank's, "'tis a pity," he said, in bitter scorn, "the wood could not have gone with you, that the world might not interrupt your loves." He did not follow them, but continued pacing to and fro. Sometimes a low muttering sound came from him; and then again a vehement gesture showed starts of passion within him. At length, he seemed to wake again to a clearer sense of the

past, and his step quickened. "Yes," he cried, "she did cross me—I saw her—she passed like an angel before me—and then! then she vanished. Why am I fooled with this show of innocence and beauty! the fiends have all!—The universe is a hell; and all else is to mock and torture us with longings. What! flesh and blood, and look so pure, when the pulse beats high,—hot! hot! And seem as ignorant as infancy, too, as if the rebel body told them nothing. Well may the spirits laugh at our self cheating! And me, too, dark and ungainly as I am—gloomy—silent!—O, 'twas a pretty fancy in her to have a fantastic passion, to fondle my ugliness for a while, then turn to the other, and clasp him in heightened beauty!—Ease me, ease me of this torture!" he cried, darting from the wood.

It was near midnight when he reached the house. He stopped under an elm near it, without any settled purpose. Esther's father had been sent for, but was absent; and Frank, unwilling to leave the house, remained till late. The clock in the village at last struck twelve, the moon was down, and one black cloud over the sky. At last the door opened, and as Frank came out, Paul saw him by the light in the entry.

He came so close to the tree, that Paul drew up straight, as he passed ; but so dark was it, that he seemed like a blacker shadowy substance going by. "Now might I do it," thought Paul ; "but he's not my victim ; some other, doomed like me, must do that deed." When the sound of Frank's tread at length died away, Paul went to the door, and tried cautiously to open it. It was fastened.—"Shall I knock ? No, 'tis better so.—I have it. I'll prove her ; I'll know her false ere I do it.—To the hut,—to the hut ! I'll watch her nightly. And Abel, he who serves me, and whom my soul serves, him I'll use too."

"It may not be," he muttered, as he groped his way along, "that the last sin's committed. And shall I kill her for her thoughts ? Who then would live the day out, if evil thoughts were death to us ? Do they not mingle like blaspheming spirits with our adoring moments ? And shall we creatures of corruption ask of our fellows, love constant and untainted ? But to feign it so—to weep over me in excess of joy and fondness—so she protested—and I with a simple faith believed it, did I ? Women's tears ! why, they are very proverbs.—The wood ! the wood ! Puts her arm in his, does she ?—and leans on

him, too, in heart-sick languishment! Would, and yet dares not; loves the sin to very madness, and sighs, 'O, that it were no sin.' Away, away; let me not look on't!—'Tis all a lie—a phantasm raised by the powers of hell to make my soul theirs.—What! innocent, and died by my hand? Hear them—how they mock and laugh at me! I'll know more—all!"

He made his way forward as well as he could, but the darkness and stillness oppressed him. It seemed as if all life in the universe was at an end; nothing but death everywhere, and like a power. He was climbing a rock, when a cold, lean hand suddenly pressed against his face, and a shriek went up, that made the whole atmosphere one shrill sound; it seemed to him to enter and fill his very body. He could not speak, nor move a limb. "You child of hell," he called out, at last, "who set you on to this? Speak, where are you? Will you not answer?"

Abel, believing that he had touched one of those beings who continually haunted him, had in his terror fallen from the rock.—"Was it not one of them?" he cried in a feeble voice. "Is it you, my master? Do come and help me. I'm bruised, dreadfully bruised. I meant no harm."

“And what brought you here at this hour, so dark a night?” asked Paul, getting down by him.

“I was after you, Sir.”

“And why do you hunt me thus? Is it to make me, like you, a child of the damned? Why were you under the hedge to day? O! that was a moment of more than earthly joy to me, and your blasted form crossed me, and flung me out from heaven!”

“Do not speak to me so,” said Abel. “I do what I must do: and they will never let me leave you any more.”

“Well! well! but what made you look so soon for me here again?”

“I heard you cry out, and saw you run from the house; and then your wife fell, I thought, as she passed the window; and then I remembered what you told me, and what They are always telling me about something to be done. And it was put into my mind that that was it; and, somehow, I can’t tell how, that I had made you kill her.” Paul shuddered. “I would have run after you; but I was afraid they would see me and catch me; so I crawled through the hedge, and went away round the house; and

when I got there I could see nothing of you. And I looked all along this passage and over the wood. At last, Sir, I went to the very hut, and looked in,—I did, truly, Sir, though something glimmered over my eyes so, I could hardly see. I couldn't find you anywhere; so I thought I would go back to the house and wait till night." —There was nothing more said. Abel soon fell asleep, while Paul sat musing till daybreak.

The clouds now began to break up and move off like an army of giants; and the sun soon appeared, flinging his light across them, and throwing over them gorgeous apparel of purple and gold; making them fit attendants on such a king.—“Rouse you and follow me,” said Paul, shaking Abel by the arm.

As he drew near the hut, the vision he had seen there, the world of terrors that had been opened to him in trance, and the instrument then put into his hand, and for a purpose of which he could not doubt, came all to his mind like a terrible and fatal certainty from which there was no turning away. He did not recoil in horror; there was no shuddering at the thought of the deed, no agony of prayer for escape. It acted like long dungeon darkness upon him. A sullen, gloomy

stillness spread over his mind, dulling his senses, and filling the soul with one dark, sleepy thought, dreamlike and dim. He entered the hut slowly, and stood in the middle of it. No muttering sound came from him, nor did he move a limb; his eyes rolled like a blind man's, seeing nothing, and searching for light. Abel, who had ventured as far as the door, stood aghast and almost breathless, gazing on him; looking for the moment that he would sink into the ground or be swept off in sheets of fire. It was nearly an hour before there was any motion in him. At last his head sunk on his chest, his eyes were cast down, and Abel heard him breathe, once, long and heavy. He came towards the door with a slow, wandering step. Abel shrunk from him, as if he had been a dead man put in motion. He went to the edge of the bank, and sat down upon the roots of the pine, his feet resting on the sand. Abel still kept his eye upon him in awful suspense. There was a slender stone lying amongst the roots. Paul's eye at last fell on it, and became fixed. By and by he put out his hand and took it up. He continued a long while turning it over, and feeling of it, and looking at it on all sides. He put his hand to his bosom,

then drew it back, giving a nod, as if saying, all was as it should be. "Come hither, Abel," he said. Abel went, as if drawn to him. "Here's money for food," he said, taking some from his pocket. Abel put out his hand, but jerked it back as Paul's came near it; and the money fell on the sand. He stooped and picked it up. Paul did not seem to notice his fears.— "Go next to my house; find out all you can, and bring me word. Think not to betray me," he continued, without looking up. "I am with you wherever you go."—Abel seemed to wither at the words. Paul's eye was fixed on him in side glance, till out of sight. Then looking cautiously round, he drew the knife slowly from his bosom. It was pointed. He felt of it. The point was dull. He drew it once across the stone. The sound curdled his blood. He went on with his work. The sun flashed upon him from the sand, there was no breeze amongst the branches, and nothing stirring for miles round. No sound reached his ear, but the hot, singing noise of the insects under the tree, and the whetting of the knife. Blazing noon came, and Paul still went on with his work, stopping only to feel the point of the knife, examine its handle and scrape

off the rust about it. The sun was at last about setting ; no cloud near it. It was glowing ; and its whole rim clearly marked. He looked on it wistfully, and seemed to pray in mind to it, not to forsake him. It half disappeared, then shot suddenly and silently down. His eyes shut ; his face for a moment was tremulous and mournful, but he did not sigh. When he looked up again, there were no bright tree-tops, no holy vesper of birds ; it was all sad, still twilight. Presently a light night-breeze passed over the pines, which sent out a low, mourning sound. It struck on his ear like the notes of spirits wailing the newly departed. He started up, and looked into the wood, as if he saw there the passing pall. He waved his hand once or twice before his eyes, to scatter the vision ; then turning round again, and placing the stone back amongst the roots, and putting the knife in his bosom, went and seated himself before the hut.

Abel returned at night, but with little news. The servants, he said, were continually going out and in, but they would not look at him, nor answer him when he spoke to them.

“ Did you see none besides the servants ? ”

“Only young Mr. Frank Ridgley. He went into the house about noon ; but I saw nothing more of him.”

“I’ll know where he is to be seen then,” muttered Paul, rising.

He passed on through the wood and passage, then took his way to the house. All was quiet. He walked round it, but saw nothing. It was to him like a place he was shut out from for ever, the only blessed spot in a world where all else was cursed. He stood looking on it, with longing and home-sickness. By and by a light appeared in his wife’s chamber. He raised his eyes to it as to a loved star. Presently Esther passed near the window. At the sight of her he covered his eyes with his hand. He could bear it no longer ; but rushing from the house, hurried back to the hut.

The next morning Abel was sent again ; and the day was wearing away with Paul like the former. He seemed scarcely conscious what he was doing, or what was the purpose of his mind. Abel returned a little past noon, telling him that he saw his wife with Frank, going toward the wood, on the other side of the ridge, about an hour before. Paul sprang up, and ran for-

ward, Abel following him. He went over every mound and through every valley. Frank, however, had, in the mean time, returned with Esther from searching after her husband; (her father having before taken another rout) and recollecting the Devil's Haunt, as it was called, set off alone for it immediately. After much clambering and toil he reached it, traversed the whole ground, and examined the hut all round; but no trace appeared of man's having been there for years. He returned late, tired and disappointed.

The sight of the wood, and what he had witnessed there, excited Paul's mind, so that he continued like a dog in full chase through it till near midnight, without considering how idle was his search at that hour. At last he became exhausted, his torpor returned, and he went back to his hiding place, like one walking in his sleep.

About dusk, the following day, Abel returned with the information that Esther's father was to set off the next morning on a journey of a few days. —“Then,” thought Paul, “will be my time to make all sure. No husband, nor father by, still rooms, and moonlight. Will they not put toys into the brain, and make the heart beat?”

“You must see him start,” he said to Abel, “and mark who goes with him.”

Abel was in full time to see Mr. Waring enter his carriage. He had set off to make Paul's father acquainted with what had happened, and to consult with him what course to pursue. He would have gone sooner, had he not been afraid to leave Esther, whom he staid with to sooth and comfort ; for her mind was nearly unsettled. Frank promised, at his going, that no pains should be spared to discover Paul, and that he would be as a brother to Esther. The old gentleman left home with a sorrowful, misgiving heart ; and Abel hastened to make known his departure, which took place about noon.

Paul sat as he had done each day before, in the same spot, passing the knife slowly over the stone, then stopping and feeling of it, and looking it over, seeming but faintly conscious of what he was about. His expression, though dark, was dull and abstracted, and all his motions heavy, slow and uncertain. The blood moved sluggishly, and life seemed scarcely going on in him. When Abel came up, Paul did not, as usual, conceal the knife. Abel knew it instantly, though now bright and sharpened. All his horrors rushed upon him ; his knees knocked against each other, his hands struck

against his thighs, his eyes glared wildly, and he fell on the sand, at Paul's feet.—“The knife!” he cried, “hide it! hide it! there's murder!—the deed's doing, now, now! Save me! take me out o'this blood!” Paul leaped upon the bank, and stood looking down on Abel in stupid horror. He seemed to him struggling in a red, clotted sea, which presently appeared sinking into the ground, leaving drops here and there rolling on the sand, till at last he saw nothing more of them.

Abel recovered slowly; and raising himself on his knees, looked imploringly in Paul's face. He saw nothing there but an unchanging, sullen gloom.

“And what do you bring me?” asked Paul.

“I saw him leave the house in his carriage, this noon.”

“Alone?”

“Yes, Sir, alone.”

“To night it must be done then. Do you not hear them telling me, Abel?”

“Send me not again!” cried Abel. “O, spare me!”

“Is it not fated, boy? Think you the bonds of hell, 'hat now hold you, can be broken?”

Look in ; is not He there, busy at your heart ?
Your work is doing—mine's to come, quickly."

" We're lost then !" cried Abel, springing up.
" Let me go with you."

Paul continued wandering through the wood ; Abel following close after him, wherever he turned. They went on in silence ; Paul now and then sending a glance back on Abel, as if he were some evil thing dogging him at his heels.

He at last bent his way to the passage over the ridge ; and when he had passed it, stopped suddenly, turning his eye on Abel. Abel came up. Paul pointed towards the house.—" Bring me word quickly." He then sat down upon a rock, gazing, like an outcast, upon the distant chimney-tops of his own home, while Abel crawled away to his appointed task. Before long, Abel returned, saying he had been round the house but saw nothing, till at last, as he was coming away, Mr. Ridgley passed him, and went in. A flush crossed Paul's cheek ; but he said nothing.

Frank, according to his promise to her father, went to see Esther. She was walking the room, when he entered, her arms folded, her long, dark

hair fallen round her pale face and sunken eye. She looked up at him, as asking if there were any good thing to tell her. Frank understood it. "Nothing as yet," he said, "but I hope—" She shook her head despondingly, as she turned away and walked to the window. "Do not despair so," said he, going towards her, "all may be right again in a few days."—She drew up, as she turned round upon him. Her look was mournful, with something of reproach in it, as if it were not in his nature to know what she felt, and that he was trying to cheat a common sorrow.—He shrunk back, and moved towards the door. She followed hastily after him, seizing him by the arm, "Nay, nay, go not from me so; trouble has made me strange. My more than brother," said she, giving him her pallid hand, "if you never see me again, do not remember that I ever looked in unkindness on you. Or if I ever spoke lightly when you were earnest, forget it, will you?—It seems to me, I think," she said, after a pause, and passing her hand over her brow, as if trying to recall her thoughts,—"I think I once made light of what you said to me.—Well, well, there's no more trifling in this world.—Yes, others may, but I may not.—"

off All's dark here ;—go where it's brighter !” said she, motioning him from her. He looked at her earnestly. He saw the hurried state of mind pass off, and her calm sorrow returning. He bade her a kind good night, saying he would see her again in the morning.—“ Perhaps so,” said she to herself, as he left the house.

She stood at the door, looking upward at the stars, and then upon the fair, silent moon, whose light fell like sleep upon the earth. “ So I stood,” said she, “ and so the moon shone on us, when he first told me that he loved me.—And there—there he comes !” she cried, as her eye caught the figure of a man descending a hill in the road. He sunk gradually down, till lost behind the hedge. At last she heard his step, as he drew near the house. “ Paul !” she called out, in an eager, shrill voice. There was no answer, but that of the sharp taunting echoes that rang off amongst the rocks. “ He’s dead,” said she, shuddering, “ and they mock me with it !” She listened with a beating heart. The man passed by, and the sound of his steady tread, died slowly away. She walked back into the parlour ; and lying down on the sofa, her sufferings and present state wandered like a dream through her mind.

Mr. Waring began his journey; but the farther he went from home, the more troubled he became. A misgiving, which he could not control, took possession of him; and he at last ordered his servant to drive back. As soon as he reached home, he set off for his daughter's house.

Paul had remained seated on the rock. Abel was a little below him, looking wistfully and eagerly at him, as if his very life depended upon each look and motion of Paul's. For a long time, there was no more movement or change of expression, than if he had been a statue cut out of the rock he sat on. But as the time drew near, the heavy, settled gloom broke slowly up, and troubled and fearful thoughts began to stir themselves in his mind. Abel saw sudden tremblings pass over his frame, and a twitching of the muscles of the face. As the huge, mysterious shadows of evening gathered round him, he looked hastily about, and there were sudden flashings of the eye. He muttered something, as if the shadows had been spirits come to warn and watch him to his work. Abel looked on with clasped hands, as if praying it might not be, till he became so weak that he could hardly

keep his seat. "They are on him now," cried Abel to himself. "O, how they torture him! And they are coming—I feel them coming—they are seizing me!"—A cold sweat ran over his body.

The twilight died away. For a while Paul became motionless again, and seemed lost in thought; till leaping suddenly to the ground, with his eye eagerly fixed, grasping the knife and crying out, "On! on! I'll follow you!" he rushed swiftly forward.—"Stay! stay!" shrieked Abel, darting after him, and seizing upon the skirts of his coat. Paul ran on, till he dragged Abel to the earth, and his hold loosened. He turned, and saw the poor boy stretched on the ground.—"Stop, let me go with you," gasped out Abel, "do not murder—murder them!"

"Murder? The deed's yours—Theirs. They who set you on to curse me—all do it.—'Tis done! One hell swallows up all!" he screamed, spurning Abel from him, and rushing on again. This was too much for Abel's weakened reason. To believe he had been used as the eternal curse of the man who had been kind to him and nourished him, when no one else would so much as look on him, and to be thrown off at last by

him, too! He sprang from the ground, he leaped, he danced, he shouted, and ran in, mad, amongst the rocks.

When Mr. Waring reached the house, he found his daughter lying in a state of mind but faintly conscious of what had passed. He took her hand and called her by name. She looked up at him surprised.—“I thought, you had gone, Sir. Why are you here?” she asked eagerly, and getting up. “Is he found, is he mad—dead?”

“We have discovered nothing; but I was unwilling to leave you.”

“Then you would not leave me; yet he could—he could leave me—break my heart, and leave me to die alone, all alone.—Do not blame me, Paul; I meant nothing. I know, mortal cannot tell or think how much you love me.—Come, let me part back your hair; I must smooth that brow, too. There! there! Now you look as you do when you call me your own Esther.”

“My child, my daughter,” said her father, taking her hand again, “try to recollect yourself.”

“I do now,” she said; “but my mind wanders strangely. O, my father, he had a soul so large!

And when wild thoughts, I know what they were, did not possess it, it was all so full of love for me! They fired his brain, and he's gone away to die, none know where, and I cannot go to him.—But I, too, shall die soon; and then I'll meet him where there's no more trouble," she sobbed out, as she fell on her father's neck, while he supported her in his arms.

At this instant Paul reached one of the windows, the blinds of which were shut. There was a dim light in the room. He had heard that the father had gone on his journey; and not long before, Abel had seen Frank go into the house. He could just perceive his wife hanging round some one's neck, and the man's arm round her waist. At the sight, he gave a shout of demoniac triumph, and ran from the window. Loud as it was, Esther was too much lost in her wretchedness to hear it. Her father was alarmed; and without telling her what he had heard or suspected, advised her to rest awhile, and then went out with the servants. They returned disappointed. He told Esther he would not leave the house that night, as she was not well. At a late hour, all being still abroad, they retired to rest; and Esther, worn with her distress, soon fell into a deep sleep.

Paul drew near the house once more, and watched till the last light was put out.—“The innocent and guilty both sleep, all but Paul. Not even the grave will be a resting place for me. They hunt and drive me to the deed; and when 'tis done, will snatch the abhorred soul to fires and tortures. Why should I rest more? The bosom I slept sweetly on—blissful dreams stealing over me—the bosom that to my delighted soul seemed all fond and faithful—why, what harboured in it? Lust and deceit, and sly, plotting thoughts, showing love where they most loathed. They stung me,—ay, in my sleep, crept out upon me, and stung me to madness—poisoned my very soul—hot, burning poisons!—Peace, peace, your promptings, Ye that put me to this deed,—drive me not mad! Am I not about it?”

He walked up cautiously to the door, and taking a key from his pocket, unlocked it, and went in. There was now a suspense of all feeling in him. He entered the parlour. His wife's shawl was hanging on the back of a chair; books in which he had read to her were lying on the table, and her work-table, near it, open. His eye passed over them, but

there was no emotion. He left the room, and ascended the stairs with a slow, soft step, stealing through his own house cautiously as a thief. He unlocked the door of his dressing-room, and passed on without noticing any part of it. His hand shook as he partly opened his wife's chamber door. He listened—all was still. He cast his eye round, then entered and shut the door after him. He walked up to her bed without turning his eyes towards it, and seated himself down upon it, beside her. Then it was he dared to look on her, as she lay in all her beauty, wrapt in a sleep so gentle he could not hear her breathing. She looked as if an angel talked with her in her dreams. Her dark, glossy hair had fallen over her bright, fair neck and bosom, and the moonlight, striking through it, penciled it in beautiful thready shadows on her.

Paul sat for a while with folded arms, looking down on her. His eye moved not, and in his dark face was the unchanging hardness of stone. His mind appeared elsewhere. There was no longer feeling in him. He seemed waiting the command of some stern power. The order at last came. He laid his hand upon her heart, and felt its regular beat; then drew the knife

from his bosom. Once more he laid his hand upon her heart ; then put the point there. He pressed his eyes close with one hand, and the knife sunk to the handle. There was one convulsive start, and a low groan. He looked on her. A slight flutter passed over her frame, and her filmy eyes opened on him once ; but he seemed as senseless as the body that lay before him. The moon shone fully on the corpse, and on him that sat by it, and the silent night went on. By and by up came the sun in the hot flushed sky, and sent his rays over them. Paul moved not, nor heeded the change—there was no noise, nor motion—there were they two together like two of the dead.

At last Esther's attendant entered suddenly, and saw the gloomy figure of Paul before her. She ran out with a cry of terror ; and in a moment the room was filled with servants. The old man came in, trembling and weak ; no tear came from him, nor a groan. He bowed his head, as saying, it is done.

The alarm was given, and Frank, with the neighbours, went up to the chamber. Though the room was nearly full, not a sound was heard. The stillness seemed to spread from Paul and

the dead, like a spirit, over all them. Frank and some others came near him, and stood before him; but he continued looking on his wife, as he sat with his crossed hands resting on his thigh; while the one which had done the murder, still held the bloody knife.

No one moved. At last they looked at each other, and one of them took Paul by the wrist. He turned his slow, heavy eye on them, as if asking who they were, and what had happened. They instinctively shrunk back, letting go their hold, and his arm fell like a dead man's.

There was a movement near the door; and presently Abel stood directly before Paul, his hands drawn between his knees, his body distorted and seeming to writhe with pain, the muscles of his face hard and twisted, and his features pinched, cold, and blue. There was a gleam and glitter, and something of a laugh, and anguish, too, in his crazed eye, as it flitted back and forth from Esther to Paul. At last Paul glanced upon him. At the sight of Abel he gave a shuddering start that shook the room. He looked once more on his wife; his hair rose up, and eyes became wild.—“Esther!” he gasped out, tossing up his arms as he threw himself

forward. He struck the bed, and fell to the floor. Abel looked, and saw his face black with the rush of blood to the head. He gave a leap that made him nearly touch the ceiling; and with a deafening, sharp shriek that rung through the house, darted out of the room, and at one spring reached the outer door.

They felt of Paul.—Life had left him.

Frank took the Father from the room. Preparations were hastily made; and about the close of day, Esther's body, followed by a few neighbours and friends, was carried to the grave. The grave-yard was not far from the foot of the stony ridge. As they drew near it, the sun was just going down, and the sky clear, and of a bright, warm glow. Presently a figure was seen running and darting in crossing movements along the top of the ridge, leaping from point to point, more like a creature of the air than of earth, for it hardly seemed to touch on any thing. It was mad Abel. So swift and shooting were his motions, and so quickly did he leap and dance to and fro, that it appeared to the dazzled eye as if hundreds of fiends were holding their hellish revels in the air. And now and then a wild laugh reached the mourners that seemed to

come out from the still sky. When it was night, the men who had made Paul's grave a little without the consecrated ground, came to the house, and taking up the body, moved off towards the place in which they were to lay it.—No bell tolled for the departed; no one followed to mourn over him as he was laid in the ground away from man, or to hear the earth fall on his coffin—that sound which makes us feel as if our living bodies were turning into dust.

It had been a chilly night; and while the frost was yet heavy on the grass, some of the neighbours went to wonder and moralize over Paul's grave. There appeared something singular upon it. They ventured timidly on, and found lying across it, poor Abel. He was apparently dead; and some of the boldest took hold of him. He opened his eyes a little, and uttered a faint, weak cry. They dropped their hold; his limbs quivered and stretched out rigid—then relaxed. His breath came once broken and quick—it was his last.

THE WEST WIND.

BENEATH the forest skirts I rest,
Whose branching pines rise dark and high,
And hear the breezes of the West
Among the threaded foliage sigh.

Sweet Zephyr ! why that sound of woe ?
Is not thy home among the flowers ?
Do not the bright June roses blow,
To meet thy kiss at morning hours ?

And lo, thy glorious realm outspread !
Yon stretching valleys green and gay,
And yon free hill-tops, o'er whose head
The loose white clouds are borne away.

And there the full broad river runs,
And many a fount wells fresh and sweet,
To cool thee, when the mid-day suns
Have made thee faint beneath their heat.

Thou wind of joy and youth and love !
Spirit of the new wakened year ;
The sun, in his blue realm above,
Smooths a bright path when thou art here.

In lawns the murmuring bee is heard,
 The wooing ringdove in the shade ;
 On thy soft breath the new-fledged bird
 Takes wing, half happy, half afraid.

Ah, thou art like our wayward race ;—
 When not a shade of pain or ill
 Dims the bright smiles of nature's face,
 Thou lov'st to sigh and murmur still.

Wm. L. G. and

THE

IDLE MAN.

Vol. I
No. IV.

How various his employments, whom the world
Calls idle. *Cowper.*

NEW-YORK:
WILEY & HALSTED, No. 3, WALL-STREET.

1822.

Southern District of New York, ss.

BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the eighteenth day of May, in the forty-fifth year of the Independence of the United States of America, WILEY & HALSTED, of the said district, have deposited in this office the title of a book, the right whereof they claim as proprietors, in the words following, to wit :

The Idle Man.

How various his employments, whom the world
Calls idle.

Cowper.

In conformity to the Act of Congress of the United States, entitled, "An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned;" and also to an act, entitled, "An act, supplementary to an act, entitled, An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned, and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching historical and other prints."

G. L. THOMPSON,

Clerk of the Southern District of New-York.

MEN AND BOOKS.

“Read, and fear not thine own understanding.”

Shirley's Preface to Beaumont and Fletcher.

“Look around !

Mark how one being differs from another ;

Yet the world's book is spread before each human brother.”

Barton.

WHATEVER comes from the press of this country, however small may be its pretensions, deserves our notice. Every thing published here must have some influence. We have not done, nor are we doing so much, that our poor things are lost, and our worst unknown. Ours is rather a solitary way, over which few minds have as yet travelled, where every thing that has been there may be seen, and where all that appears will be known and may be tried. Our failures are as obvious as our successes, and it becomes us to distinguish between them. It is idle to wait for

what may be said of us abroad. If we lack feeling, and withhold patronage ; if our judgment be a prejudice, and ill will come of excellence ; if we will hold no communion with minds which happen not to be of our school, and rigorously prescribe the height and the depth, the length and the breadth, to the current of thought and the reaches of the imagination, our speculations about what we mean to be, or to do, will avail us nothing. Our duty to ourselves is a plain one ; we must estimate fairly and value honestly, whatever may have as an end literary character, or, if you will, intellectual distinction. It is time that a good spirit were amongst us—a spirit which will welcome whatever is well done, no matter by whom ; which shall give to general opinion, or proffered criticism, the character for liberality claimed for our institutions, and secure to those who come forward practically in aid of literature, a good reception and a fair treatment. There appears to be little in the way of such a course. Public opinion, as it regards works of science or literature, does not flow in the channel of party, whether of taste or politics. There is too little of local prejudice yet current amongst us, to lead us to look for the characters of authors or their books in geographical distinctions.

Though it be a comparatively easy course, it is not without its difficulties. Little has been done here of a purely literary character. The number of literary men, who have appeared at any particular period or place, has been too small to take up much of our attention, or to make patronage a pleasure or a duty. Our writers, with very few exceptions, have not depended for their bread upon their books. One successful effort has rarely been followed by another ; and either from indolence, or the fear of losing what may have been gained, the field has been left as soon as entered. Our literature has thus been trusted to accident or caprice, and from the time of Brown down to the present moment, so wide are the chasms between its parts, that you would hardly believe they belonged to each other. It is certainly not strange that so little interest has been taken by the public in what is doing here of a literary character. But the want of a general feeling on the subject has this obvious effect ; it leaves the business of criticism or literary opinion to be managed by a few. From being thus limited, literary interest comes to be little more than individual opinion ; and private feeling, or individual prejudice, not only settles the most in-

teresting questions in our literature, but decides the fate of our authors.

To go no further with this now, I would mention a rule or two which I have laid down for myself. My way has always been to judge of writings by their own individual merits solely. I do not stop to ask whether the writer has thought or expressed himself as others have, or as I should have done, but I endeavour to trace attentively the operation of his mind in its progress of thought, and to learn with what faithfulness this has been followed out. I always try the character of a work by its correspondence, or want of correspondence with the thoughts and feelings which have already occupied my own mind, and with those which may have been suggested while reading it. In fewer words, I judge for myself; and if a man is incapable of doing this, he has no right to use the opinions of others, for he can judge no better of them, than of the subject which they concern. I know of no other rational method, by which to make up an opinion of books which relate either to the imagination, or to morals. We are not competent judges in either case, unless in some of our hours we have been conscious that we are thinking beings, and have given these lucid inter-

vals to the contemplation of things which elevate and delight our intellectual nature, and to the observance of their operations on the minds of others, as they are laid open to us in books.

This mode of judging a book by its own merits is altogether opposed to the besetting sin of popular criticism. This consists in the comparison of different books—the works of different minds—with each other, and in finding in a want of correspondence, a reason for condemnation. This mode of judging is founded wholly on the doctrine of *models*,—and in literature there can be nothing more absurd. What literary work is there, which is worth preserving, that does not differ in all that is best in it from every other work? Who are those modern writers who have been most read and most admired? They are those who, with the same language, the same intellectual natures, surrounded by the same scenes, and in the midst of the same incidents, have given you books, which act upon you by an agency so new, so unlike all you have met with before, that you almost feel as if you had received a volume from another planet, and had got with it a gift of tongues to read it. And why should it not be so? With the same material what has not been done in

nature? Where is the model of nature? In what region has the standard been fixed, and where is the series of nearer and remoter correspondences, which allow you for a moment to judge of the individual magnificence or beauty solely by comparison? We indeed talk of the sublime by one name, as if it were one thing, and so of the beautiful, and the classification answers its purpose well enough. But in nature every thing is individual, and belongs to itself. Harmony here is founded in nothing so little as in mere resemblance; and the intellectual nature harmonises with the material; and hence it is, that its greater operations, resembling each other only in their being greater, are varied by every thing that is novel, in the manner under which they are presented. You might as well demand of men to look alike, before they are admitted into good company, as to make the reception of books depend on the faithfulness with which they resemble a model, whether in the thought they contain, or in their manner.

It is the habit of our readers to judge of books by comparison. They take it for granted, in the first place, that our writers are imitators, for, say they, they use the English language. They next discover whom they resemble. Their last and

easiest task is to condemn, and this they do, because our copyists, as they consider them, do not equal their originals. I was amused, the other day, with a specimen of criticism upon Salmagundi—"It seems to me," said an acquaintance, as he threw down the volume he had been reading, "that it is almost as poor as Dean Swift." This was a kind of literary estimation, and founded on comparison, entirely new to me. This mode of judging has one evil in it worth mentioning. It tempts men to run a parallel between books essentially different in their object and character, and to find their distinguishing qualities in the different degrees of success with which it is taken for granted, that the same things have been attempted; and so it becomes the misfortune of our writers to be identified with each other by public opinion, and to see all that is distinctive in each sacrificed to a most absurd mode of criticism.

There is another rule which has much weight with me in reading and forming opinions of works of imagination or feeling. I never allow myself to be influenced by the opinions of what are termed professed scholars. I think that he who commonly passes for a scholar is a most unsuitable judge of what belongs either to the imagination

or the heart. He is called by his profession to the revolutions of literature, and the different styles which have characterized its periods, as they are termed. His are the rules by which men have written, who, in the lofty exercises of their fine minds, never dreamed of a rule. His business is with language, not as the expression of thought, but as a human invention, and you always find him occupied with the details of its artificial arrangement. It is, soberly, not very important to him what the thoughts in a book are ; and its words and language are more likely to be regarded by him as pieces of the material which are to be worked up in the mechanical business of sentence-making, than as something originally proceeding from a mind—the representatives of intellectual things. This order of men are so much the creatures of rule, that their systems of criticism put you in mind of a book on Dutch horticulture, and your very soul aches to see them straiten thought and smooth down feeling, till they look as little like nature as a Flemish avenue, or a hanging garden. These pattern critics all have their idols. You must bow down to these and practically worship them too, let them be ever so monstrous, or all you do

will be accounted abominable. The worst of all is, these idols shift with ages, and every age has many. Hence you have as many schools of taste as generations of men; as if man's mind, like his dress, were to take a new shape in the succession of years, or from the caprices of rhetoric masters.

The truth is, the great features of the mind always remain the same, and you might as well undertake to proselytize nature, as to turn its inherent and essential qualities from their original purposes. Men always have appeared and always will appear, though the intervals may be long, and the darkness great, who will in this way connect their own age, with the best of those that are gone,—who will bring you new treasures from a vein their own hands have wrought, and make you and the succession of all ages, venerate and love them, for a bounty so pure, so vast, and so exhaustless. There is something mysterious and fearfully solemn in the intellectual nature of man, thus elevated and distinct from every thing around it. Homer, and Milton, and Shakspeare, hardly seem to have been of the species of those they lived with, or with ourselves. They remind you of those

unmeasured mountains, on the tops of which a man might not live ;—they seem to have had communion with what eye hath not seen, and there found the way to man's heart, and opened to you its profoundest depths.

There is another order of men which claims the privilege of exercising a power over authors. It is the great body of the reading part of the community. It is popularly called the world ; the public ; the people of taste, sense, and discrimination ; the discerning few, &c. &c. As a body, this order is capable of doing much good, but it unfortunately happens that it is too often split up into parties and clans, or is under the influence of scholars and reviewers.

Now, whether aimed at, or not, it is too much the tendency of such an influence to tempt men to yield the exercise of their own judgment to any body who will judge for them ; to make them superficial ; to give them partial views,—yet with an authority that commands their deference. People are apt to rest satisfied under this authority, and it is seldom that they are disposed to go to their author and try his work by their own minds. Or what is worse, they sometimes affect to be critical, too ; and with the common

sense which nature had given them, bewildered amongst rules but half learned and not half understood, they take a book in hand, as if it were a thing on which they were to pass judgment, rather than as something that was to enrich their minds and give impulse to their feelings. To make their pretensions sure, they become censorious, dogmatical and loud ; for dealers in second-hand opinions are always more positive and talkative than are those from whom they get them—just as your retailer makes more show and bustle with his wares, than does the importer of whom he buys them.

So that, with the exception of a few men of thorough taste, one is pretty sure of meeting with a juster judgment on what is in a book—a truer feeling for its delicate touches, and a quicker apprehension of what is peculiar and imaginative in it, amongst sensible, self-taught men, who live out of what we choose to call literary society, and who have been in the habit of trusting to their own understandings, than amongst those who are forever reading, to talk about books, and who meet to compare and club opinions. It is no wonder that the man of feeling grows weary, and is ready to say with

Sterne, that "the cant of hypocrisy may be the worst, but that the cant of criticism is the most tormenting." There may indeed be hypocrisy in this as in every thing else ; and it is found where a man has buried what was native in his feelings and taste under a mawkish fastidiousness, an affected elegance, or a vain pedantry of rule—where he does not love with all his heart what he would appear to, but mistrusts its excellence, and has a misgiving of mind that what he pretends to look down upon may be above him. It is impiety against nature to complain that so few are born with a perception for the beautiful in thoughts and things. Most men could see well enough, did they not let fashion and affectation lead them blindfold.

It is in this that the principal evil lies ; and it is unfriendly to literature. A man's own good sense, for the main purposes of literature, is to him infinitely better, than the judgment of any body else. Books are talked about as amusing, entertaining, pleasant ; and authors, in the highest departments of writing, are regarded as contributing to some momentary gratification ; coming in at those odd times when nothing else can enter. Poetry, the very highest effort the

mind can make, has been the most abused. These different terms, which, however, mean the same thing, have possibly been applied by the leaders of taste to literary works for the sake of convenience ; but they have done much to impair the best influences of the best books. They are a base currency on the great exchange of letters, but writers have been taught to regard them as the true.

One of the effects of all this is to make a man propose to himself in writing, an end as fatal to originality, as it is opposed to all the highest objects in writing. It makes him look to the publick, the world, or the what-not, instead of keeping his eye steadily fixed on his own mind and his own heart. He must write to please, and the inference is inevitable, he must write like some body else who has succeeded in pleasing. You make him dependent where he should be most free. You put before him a mould, by which his opinions and feelings must all be cast,—you give a direction to that which, if it be worth any thing, ought for the time to lead you.

Books are merely the expressions of the operations of the mind. When, of the highest character, they act upon the reader who can

apprehend them, in precisely the same manner that his own intellectual operations act upon himself. You forget the agency of your eyes while reading them, and are like one in a state of perfect abstraction, when all that is beautiful or sublime in nature may be around you and put you into a happy state, without your being conscious to yourself of its existence. Books owe this to their truth. It matters not what the subject may be. They have this interest exactly in proportion to their truth, to the fidelity and freedom with which the author has given you his own mind. Hence too is the infinite variety, as well as the high delight afforded by the best works. We seem to have exchanged minds with the author, and so much are we the better for the exchange, and so far are we from regretting the temporary loss of our identity, that if an occasional consciousness intervene, it is filled up with wonder that we could ever have thought so well or enjoyed so deeply what is so exclusively intellectual. This high interest does not belong to the mass of books. It enters however into the whole of such reading as engages us enough to prevent the obtrusion of a wish to quit it.

All are capable of understanding and feeling this character of books. It asks neither for a *vade mecum* of criticism to be properly estimated, nor for the authority of another individual to make it interest us. By the independent and unprejudiced exercise of individual opinion, in the judgment they may pass on books, and the patronage they extend to writers, the great reading body of the community may come to exert a most important influence over the literature of a country. They distinguish at once the writer who has found in his own mind the materials of his work, and the judgment for using them, and they offer the strongest motive for the best intellectual exertions, in the honest reception they are willing to give to what deserves it. They are better judges of works on life and character, than any other class of readers. Their whole experience of common life has taught them how infinitely varied are the beings and things around them. Their children, if they have any, have in their diversity of character, feeling, and power, excited the strongest interest; and their purpose with them has not been to destroy this individuality, but to make it answer the greatest good. The

same mode of perception, and a like use of it, they apply to books. The peculiarities of these are found to constitute the chief of their interest, and, as in the case of real life, are at once perceived to belong rather to the individual, than to his subject.

The intellectual nature of man resembles its Creator most in the variety it can produce, whether of sublimity or beauty, or of any other quality, from the most common, or most simple elements. If we will have such products, we must neither limit, nor direct the power. We are not to judge harshly of a writer, because in the quiet of our own career the violent passions had never crossed our path, for in such a case we may be incapable of a wise judgment; and if we have had no cause for grief, nor felt it with all its causes, there is still a sacredness in the record of sorrow, with which, though we may have no feeling, it were inhuman to trifle. It is not however necessary for a writer to have experienced what he describes, nor for the reader to have felt it before, in order to understand it now. When Shakspeare was said to have dipped his pen in his own heart, it was not implied that he had

felt the anguish of Lear, or the deep melancholy of Hamlet. It was simply that he knew the character of all the passions and emotions of the heart in their fullest reality, and was open to their influences; and hence in reading his histories you feel you have to do with real life. It is the same with all writers who set before you the truth; and your want of sympathy with the imaginary being or situation is the same thing, as if you were to withhold it from the realities of common life.

Some men, it is true, are constitutionally cold, and some are made so by education. The work is generally begun by suppressing feeling or ridiculing its expression. It is perfect when the adept tries its lessons upon those whose feelings, and the expression of them have not been submitted to the same discipline. It would seem that it was the part of a cold heart to chill that of others. These people sometimes tell you they want sentiment—are not sentimental,—in other words they want the perception of the tender and lovely, of the sublime and the beautiful of a moral nature, and they want the sympathy which would enable them to feel with those who have it. Sentiment

in its genuine meaning has the same relation to the moral nature, as taste to the external. It is another expression for moral taste, and those who disclaim it have parted with one of the most valuable principles of man's intellectual nature. They have feeling of some sort, but the tendency of their system is to confine it to themselves and the few who may resemble them; and they make altogether a choice and happy fraternity, for their imagination, which has died to every thing else, is busied in fancying in themselves qualities for which each one values himself and congratulates his brother. The world to such beings is a confused and disjointed machinery, going by jerks and starts, grating in all its movements, and the only lesson it teaches them is to keep out of its way. They have no eye for the beauty of its structure and free play of its parts, but form to themselves, in its stead, a system, which, whenever in motion, we find crushing under it all sympathy with what is purest and best in the imagination and heart.

“ 'Tis great pity
That such as sit at the helm provide no better
For the training up of the gentry. In my judgment,
An Academy erected, with large pensions
To such as in a table could set down
The congees, cringes, postures, methods, phrase,
Proper to every nation”—

Massinger.

“ There to learn——courtly carriage,
To make amends for his mean parentage ;
Where he unknowne and ruffling as he can,
Goes currant each where for a gentleman.”
Hall's Satires.



IN a country where affairs of public interest are brought so much within the scope of every individual, I have often thought it fortunate that men of a quiet and retired habit, are suffered to remain undisturbed in the indulgence of their tastes. I was startled, however, the other evening, at a club I occasionally frequent, by a proposition from my friend Ned Fillagree, which went to trouble this order of things. He, with great seriousness and apparent benevolence of intention, after bestowing a feeling panegyric upon the multitude of benevolent institutions

which exist amongst us, proposed a plan which he said would be the means of giving to a very worthy class of our fellow citizens an opportunity of mixing in the gay world. This class comprised those whose pecuniary means would not admit of an interchange of expensive entertainments with the wealthy, but whose talents for conversation and whose entertaining qualities would make them an acceptable addition to any polite company. Ned conceived that all such were kept out of society by that species of false pride, which would not permit them to receive favors when there was no return to be made; and his scheme he thought must completely remove the difficulty. He would have an association formed and duly incorporated under the style of the, “Fashionable Resuscitating Society”—to be composed of the wealthy givers of great entertainments,—and a fund to be raised in the following manner:—On occasion of any member of the society, whose means were undoubted and abundant, giving a ball or other entertainment,—such member to pay down a specified bonus to go towards the general purse. But where the ability to contribute could not be truly estimated by the style maintained, (cases of

not unfrequent occurrence and generally to be traced to the instrumentality of some sagacious mother of half a dozen marriageable daughters,) Ned would modify the exaction in such manner as merely to affect the quantity of music, so that such persons, when they gave a ball, by having one or two fiddles the less, might meet the contingency and still enjoy the honours of membership:—The funds of the society to be at the disposal of a discriminating committee, whose office it should be to ferret out social worth in obscurity, and to supply the means and see them appropriated in the true spirit of the institution.

Ned prides himself not a little on his good footing in the beau monde, and as he cannot separate the ideas of bustle and enjoyment, I never could convince him that my retired mode of life was the result of choice. I observed Ned, as he prefaced his proposal, to eye me with a peculiar beneficence of expression—something like that of a courtier bestowing a boon; and I now marked his entire complacency of visage as he added, “that he believed his plan, if carried into operation, would go farther to prevent suicides, than all the penal laws ever enacted.”

The pause which generally follows the introduction of any thing strange, was in this instance of short duration. No sooner had Ned made an end of speaking, than up started a trig figure, which I had never before seen, making no scruple to proclaim his hostility to Ned's suggestion, on the ground of there being no existing grievance of the nature contemplated in it. He contended that no one possessing the requisite qualities for high life need fear neglect under the present order of things. On the contrary, the press of invitations which assailed men of wit and fashion, he declared to be a growing inconvenience, and the one most requiring remedy. He portrayed the shifts and devices to which men of this stamp are often obliged to have recourse in keeping their fashionable friends in good humour, while resisting their importunities; and in the course of his harangue gave us pretty distinctly to understand, that he himself was amongst the sufferers from this species of polite persecution. He vowed it a great bore; and holding his hat in one hand, adjusting his gloves, and screwing his face into an expression of pensive resignation, instanced the necessity he was this evening under of making his bow at

no less than five different parties, thereby being compelled to forego the happiness of a longer stay amongst us.

During this harangue, I remarked a gentleman sitting by himself at one side of the fire-place ; and I thought I discovered something of sly significancy in the glances with which he occasionally surveyed the dissenting gentleman. I also imagined once or twice, as he knocked the ashes from his cigar, that I could perceive in his countenance a suppressed inclination to laughter. As soon as the object of his scrutiny was out of the room, I edged my chair near to where he was sitting, and as there was great good nature indicated in his appearance, ventured to ask if he could inform me who the gentleman might be that had just left us. He answered me with a leer, "that this person was well known to him, but he believed it would puzzle the best of them to tell how he had made his way into the club." "He is, however," continued the gentleman, "considered a prodigy of ingenuity in this way—a perfect master, Sir, of polite enginery ;—no fortress of reserve being too much for Bob Brazen. His element is a fashionable atmosphere. He will foretell you a

ball or cotillion party with as much precision as it is said a person of sensitive nerves will discern the approach of an earthquake. I remember last winter when my aunt Testy gave her great ball, Bob's calling regularly the five preceding days. During this time none of the family could move abroad without stumbling upon Bob. And on all encounters he never failed referring to the approaching festivities. The fourth day had passed, and aunt was just felicitating herself on having parried all his hints for an invitation, when a knock was heard at the door. It was Bob. This was the last day of grace with him; and his deportment bespoke sad foreboding watchfulness. Every thing was bustle and confusion in the house. Indeed the hurry of household affairs had produced such a disturbance in aunt's stock of complaisance, that seeing Bob passing the threshold at this unfortunate juncture, all efforts to suppress her ire were in vain. On entering the room, he could not but be sensible of the awkwardness of his situation. Assuming, however, a careless, playful air, he thought to make a diversion in his favour by an apt quotation; and placing himself in attitude, began—' *This busy hum of prepara-*

tion.' '*Busy hum*, indeed,' exclaimed aunt. 'I must say, Mr. Brazen, we are too busy every way to receive visits this morning'—and turning her back, desired 'that he would more fittingly time any future visit with which he might honour the family.' Neither aunt's action nor tone of voice could be cited as specimens of the conciliatory in eloquence. But Bob's was a desperate case; he was too politic to be over fastidious, and there was no alternative. Affecting, therefore, to understand the last words which aunt let drop, as an invitation to the ball; he observed, as he took his leave, that luckily he should be disengaged and would do himself the pleasure. Accordingly we had Bob Brazen at our ball, in all his wonted sprightliness and unconcern. In truth you will scarcely be at a gay assemblage in town without seeing Bob; and with those who know less of him than I do, the wonder is how he contrives to make his way into so much good company.

Happening one day to be dining with an elderly gentleman, a member of our general assembly from a remote part of the State, I was surprised by my worthy friend's jumping suddenly from his chair and running to the window. 'Pray,' said my friend,

as he took his seat again at table, 'what is the name of the youth who just passed?' 'That,' replied I, 'is Bob Brazen.' 'I thought it was he; and yet he is so changed I could hardly credit it. I am glad, however, to behold him looking so fresh and active. The young man was formerly a townsman of mine, and has caused some stir amongst us. You must know, about three years ago, upon occasion of our academy exhibition ball, Bob, as being the likeliest looking of our youngers, was appointed to conduct the festivities in quality of master of ceremonies. Bob trigged himself out in his best and smartest, and really made quite a dashing appearance; but unluckily, just as he had got the dancers arranged for the second country-dance, his father, a rough, severe old farmer who had a mortal antipathy to merri-making and extravagance, being on his way home from town, happened to drive his team up to the tavern where the company had assembled. Hearing the fiddle agoing, and learning that Bob was of the party above stairs, he did not wait to reason the matter, but seizing his cart-whip, rushed in the first impulse of his wrath, to the scene of action. Bob was in the act of giving a stamp for the music to strike up *'rural*

felicity,' when open flew the door, and the grim, raw-boned front of his enraged Dad presented itself. Not the ghost of Hamlet to the young prince could have been more appalling—a general panic and consternation seized upon the whole assembly—Bob stood breathless like one in a trance. The old farmer advanced three paces into the room, leaving space for a person to pass by him to the door ; and as he cleared the lash of his whip with one hand, uttered the word '*Bob*' in a tone something between the bark of a mastiff and the discharge of a volley of musketry. The sound of the old man's voice broke the spell which held poor Bob to his place. Awakened to a full sense of his deplorable condition, and knowing how fruitless it would be to demur, he moved with all the alacrity the disturbed state of his nerves would allow, in obedience to a significant signal from the whip-staff, towards the door.—'I'll teach you to junket, you dog,' bellowed the old rustic, as Bob drew near the point of exit—at the same time making such unequivocal demonstrations with his cart-whip, as precluded all possibility of mistake as to his method of instruction. Since that most unlucky evening, Bob has not been seen in our village ; and notwithstanding the

testimony of the stage-coach driver, who avers he saw him with a small bundle under his arm several miles from the village on the great road, it was currently reported, and is now the settled belief, that Bob drowned himself in a fit of despair the very night of his disaster. 'I am now happy,' observed my friend the representative, as he concluded his story, 'in having it in my power to clear up all doubts concerning the fate of Bob Brazen; and I am confident in doing so, I shall gladden the heart of many a damsel of our neighbourhood.'

I have troubled you, Sir, with this relation of my country friend's, because I think it has a direct and intimate connexion with Bob's distinguishing traits. It is a generally received opinion that incidents, in themselves trifling, may give a bias to the mind of deep and lasting character. And why is it not natural to suppose that Bob, considering himself in the light of a martyr to the cause of fashion, should become its most zealous votary. I have no doubt that in the recollection of the bitter mortification which attended his entrée into the polite world, he experiences a secret satisfaction in the reflection that he is now beyond the reach

of paternal tyranny. And can it be wondered at, that on one, having a white-oak cart-whip familiarized to his mind as a proper instrument of exclusion, means less potent should fail of their effect?"

Here the communicative gentleman was interrupted by a loud sound of uproar which burst upon us from the other end of the room. Instantly springing up to ascertain the cause of alarm, we beheld a scene of thorough confusion and dismay. The large table, around which we had but a few minutes before left our friends quietly seated, overturned—candles broken—chairs scattered helter-skelter—eager gesticulations on all sides, and the discordant din of twenty voices raised to their highest pitch. In the midst was Ned Fillagree, mounted upon a chair, vociferating, to order, and claiming to be heard; while at the further end of the room appeared a small pattern of a man, writhing under the firm grasp of some six or seven of the stoutest in the company, foaming with rage and uttering the direst imprecations of vengeance. It was some time before order was sufficiently restored to enable me to learn the particulars of the affray.

It seemed there was a young Creole from the West Indies, introduced to the club this evening by one of its most important members. This young gentleman friend Ned most unluckily marked out as a fit subject for his countenance and patronage. 'Tis true the young man's complexion was a little equivocal; but no one except Ned would have attributed to him the honor of affinity with that gallant race, by the conquest of whom Scipio earned his distinguishing appellation. But so it was; and no sooner had the young man seated himself at table, than Ned began to inveigh against the absurdity of a custom which deprives us of the advantages of social intercourse with a very numerous class of our species. Every pause in the conversation was improved by Ned to enforce his favorite theme. The young West Indian, not comprehending the kindness of Ned's motive, remained silent and confounded. This Ned interpreting as the effect of diffidence and self-distrust, which it would be praiseworthy in him to dispel; by way of encouragement, calling on the young man across the table to join him in a glass of wine and proposing as a toast, a health to Mr. Wilberforce, declared that he looked

forward with pleasure to the time when all invidious distinctions of colour should be done away! The West Indian's blood now boiled;—feeling himself most outrageously insulted, he made a desperate pass at Ned, overturned the table in his progress, and occasioned the scene of tumult we witnessed.

The harmony of the meeting being thus completely destroyed, it was judged most expedient to adjourn. As I walked home with Ned, it was amusing to observe how perfectly unconscious he appeared of having been guilty of the least rudeness or impropriety; laying the whole blame of the transaction to the choleric temper of the West Indian. This deadness of perception prevents his ever applying to a right use the many lessons he receives from disastrous experience. Ned is universally allowed to be the best natured fellow living; and were his benevolence of heart tempered with that nice principle of delicate discernment which we understand by the word *tact*, and which seems intuitive in some persons, his would certainly be a most estimable character. He aims at being the active agent and dispenser of all the good that comes to his friends. It appears to be the passion of his mind to cater

for every body ; and in rendering you a service, it is ten to one you are annoyed with his officiousness. With the best possible intentions, he is continually doing things in themselves extremely troublesome and offensive.

Against a system of effrontery, got up in self-complacency and used as a means of self-exaltation, as in the instance of Bob Brazen, a thorough, decided course of conduct could not fail of its effect, and one would not scruple to adopt it. But Ned Fillagree, with all his annoying improprieties, has so much that is sterling, that you are unwilling to deal harshly with him, or forswear his company. From the many good traits in his character, we are led to hope that the faulty may be amended, or at least lessened ; and involuntarily setting about the task of expostulation, we soon find ourselves stopped by his impenetrable obtuseness. On the whole, I fear Ned's case an incurable one, and that he must be classed with that school of restless, sturdy philanthropists which aims at compelling all men to be happy, without regard to fitness of means or variety of taste.

Though it may seem to run counter to good morals, that what is bad should be less offensive

than what is weak, yet we every now and then meet with characters that convince us that it is so. There are men who think of little else beside self-gratification, and who never scruple the means,—who care for us no farther than they may turn us to account,—yet having with all this a certain dexterity which makes them sure of their aim, they become almost agreeable to us against our wills, and oblige us to pass over their faults in spite of our sense of right. Even where they push for their object with more shallow artifice and with impatient rudeness, they rather amuse than disgust; make us good natured and forgiving, and incline us more to laugh than to be angry. While he who is every man's well wisher, and whose life and enjoyment it is to do good, but without having intellect enough to order or well time his purposes, teases us with kind offices, grows ungracious as he grows in zeal, and unjustly shares amongst men, the fate of a grey headed beau amongst the girls, becoming at once our torment and our sport. We are sensible that all this is not right—remonstrate with each other about it, and end with confessing our fault, and wishing it could be mended.

That we should pass over what is wrong because joined with dexterity and hardihood, is an unmixed evil ; but that bustling, active weakness, however well meant, should move us somewhat to disgust and contempt, has, like most ills, a good in it. For were it otherwise with us, the short sighted and feeble minded might become leaders in what was praiseworthy, and the cause of virtue be lost from its poor support.

MUSINGS.

—“a steadfast seat

Shall then be yours among the happy few
Who dwell on earth, yet breathe empyreal air,
Sons of the morning.—

—He sate—and talked
With winged messengers ; who daily brought
To his small Island in the ethereal deep
Tidings of joy and love.

—then, my Spirit was entranced
With joy exalted to beatitude ;
The measure of my soul was filled with bliss,
And holiest love ; as earth, sea, air, with light,
With pomp, with glory, with magnificence.”
Wordsworth's Excursion.

HAVE we looked upon the earth so long, only to reckon how many men and beasts it can maintain, and to see to what account its timber can be turned, and to what uses its rocks and waters may be put ? Do we, with Baillie Jarvie, think it a pity that so much good soil should lie waste under a useless lake, and set against the cost of draining the in-comings of the crops ? Have we lived so many years in the world and been familiar with its affairs, only to part off men into professions and trades, and to tell the due proportions required to stock

each ? Must we for ever travel the straight forward, turnpike road of business, and not be left to take the way that winds round the meadows, and leads us sociably by the doors of retired farms ? Must all the hills be levelled, and hollows filled up, that we may go like draught-horses the dull and even road of labour, the easier and with more speed ? May we not sit awhile to cool and rest ourselves in the shade of some shut-in valley, with its talking rills, and fresh and silent water plants,—or pass over the free and lit hill-tops, catching views of the broad, open country alive with the universal growth of things, and guarded with its band of mountains resting in the distance, like patriarchs of the earth ? Must all we do and all we think about have reference to the useful, while that alone is considered useful which is tangible, present gain ? Is it for food and raiment and shelter alone that we came into the world ? Do we talk of our *souls*, and live as if we, and all that surrounded us, were made up of nothing else but dull matter ? Are the relations of life for our convenience merely, or has the fulfilling of their duties none but promised and distant rewards ?

Man has another and higher nature even here; and the spirit within him finds an answering spirit in every thing that grows, and affectionate relations not only with his fellow man, but with the commonest things that lie scattered about the earth.

To the man of fine feeling, and deep and delicate and creative thought, there is nothing in nature which appears only as so much substance and form, nor any connexions in life which do not reach beyond their immediate and obvious purposes. Our attachments to each other are not felt by him merely as habits of the mind given it by the customs of life; nor does he hold them only as the goods of this world, and the loss of them as turning him forth an outcast from the social state; but they are a part of his joyous being, and to have them torn from him, is taking from his very nature.

Life, indeed, with him, in all its connexions and concerns, has an ideal and spiritual character, which, while it loses nothing of the definiteness of reality, is forever suggesting thoughts, taking new relations and peopling and giving action to the imagination. All that the eye falls upon and all that touches the heart, run off into

any distance, and the regions into which the sight stretches, are alive and bright and beautiful with countless shapings and fair hues of the gladdened fancy. From kind acts and gentle words and fond looks there spring hosts many and glorious as Milton's angels: and heavenly deeds are done, and unearthly voices heard, and forms and faces, graceful and lovely as Uriel's, are seen in the noonday sun. What would only have given pleasure for the time to another, or at most, be now and then called up in his memory, in the man of feeling and imagination, lays by its particular, and short-lived and irregular nature, and puts on the garments of spiritual beings, and takes the everlasting nature of the soul. The ordinary acts which spring from the good will of social life, take up their dwelling within him and mingle with his sentiment,

forming a little society in his mind, going on in harmony with its generous enterprises, its kindly labours, and useful pursuits. They merge in change—becoming a portion of him—become part of his secret joy and melancholy, and watering at large among his thoughts of life, till his mind feels as if it were a deep and soft sea.

ous flow, and bears them on with the multitude that fill its shoreless and living sea.

So universal is this operation in such a man, and so instantly does it act upon whatever he is concerned about, that a double process is forever going on within him, and he lives as it were a two-fold life. Is he, for instance, talking with you about a North-west passage, he is looking far off at the ice islands with their turreted castles and fairy towns, or the penguin at the southern pole, pecking the rotting seaweed on which she has lighted,—or he is listening to her distant and lonely cry within the cold and barren tracts of ice;—yet all the while he reasons as ingeniously and wisely as you. His attachments do not grow about a changeless and tiring object; but be it filial reverence, Abraham is seen sitting at the door of his tent, and the earth is one green pasture for flocks and herds;—or be it love, she who is dear to him is seen in a thousand imaginary changes of situation, and new incidents are continually happening, delighting his mind with all the distinctness and sincerity of truth. So that while he is in the midst of men doing his part in the affairs of the world, it has called up a fairy vision, and

he is walking in a lovely dream. It is round about him in his sorrows for a consolation ; and out of the gloom of his afflictions he looks forth upon an horizon touched with a gentle morning twilight and growing brighter as he gazes. Through pain and poverty and the world's neglect, when men look cold upon him, and his friends are gone, he has where to rest a tired mind that others know not of, and healings for a wounded heart which others can never feel.

And who is of so hard a nature as to deny him these ? If there are assuagings for his spirit which are never ministered to other men, it has tortures and griefs and a fearful melancholy which need them more. He brought into the world passions deep and strong—senses tremulous and thrilling at every touch—feelings delicate and shy, yet affectionate and warm, and an ardent and romantic mind. The refinements and virtues of our nature he has dwelt upon till they have almost become beauties sensible to the mortal eye, and to worship them he has thought could not be idolatry. And what does he find in the world ? Perhaps in all the multitude, he meets a mind or two which answers to his own ; but through the crowd where he looks for the

free play of noble passions, he finds men eager after gain or vulgar distinctions, hardening the heart with avarice, or making it proud and reckless with ambition. Does he speak with an honest indignation against oppression and trick? He is met by loose doubts and shallow speculations, or teasing questions as to right and wrong. Are the weak to be defended, or strong opposed? One man has his place yet to reach, and another his to maintain, and why should they put all at stake? Are others at work in a good cause? They are so little scrupulous about means, so bustling and ostentatious and full of self, so wrapt about in solemn vanity, that he is ready to turn from them and their cause in contempt and disgust. There is so little of nature and sincerity—of ardour and sentiment of character—such a dulness of perception—such a want of that enthusiasm for all that is great and lovely and true (which, while it makes us forgetful of ourselves, brings with it our highest enjoyments) such an offensive show and talk of factitious sensibility—that the current of his feelings is checked—he turns away depressed and disappointed—becomes reserved and shut up in himself, and he, whose mind is all emotion, and

who loves with a depth of feeling that few souls have ever sounded, is pointed at, as he stands aloof from men, as a creature cold and motionless.

But if manner too often goes for character—hard learnt rules for native taste—fastidiousness for refinement—ostentation for dignity—cunning for wisdom—timidity for prudence—and nervous affections for tenderness of heart—if the order of nature be so much reversed, and semblance so often takes precedence of truth, yet it is not so in all things, nor wholly so in any. The cruel and ambitious have touches of pity and remorse, and good affections are mingled with our frailties. Amidst the press of selfish aims, generous ardour is seen lighting up, and in the tumultuous and heedless bustle of the world, we meet with considerate thought and quiet and deep affections. Patient endurance of sufferings, bold resistance of power, forgiveness of injuries, hard tried and faithful friendship, and self-sacrificing love, are seen in beautiful relief over the flat uniformity of life, or stand out in steady and bright grandeur in the midst of the dark deeds of men. And then again, the vices of our nature are sometimes

revealed with a violence of passion and a terrible intellectual energy which fasten on the imagination of a creative and high mind, while they call out opposing virtues to pass before it in visions of glory. For "there is a soul of goodness in things evil," and the crimes of men have brought forth deeds of heroism and sustaining faith, that have made our rapt fancies but gatherings from the world in which we live.

And there are beautiful souls too in the world to hold kindred with a man of a feeling and refined mind, and there are delicate and warm and simple affections that now and then meet him on his way, and enter silently into his heart like peculiar blessings. Here and there on the road go with him for a time some who call to mind the images of his soul,—a voice or a look is a remembrancer of past visions, and breaks out upon him like openings through the clouds. The distant beings of his imagination seem walking by his side, and the changing and unsubstantial creatures of the brain put on body and life. In such moments his fancies are turned to realities, and over the real the lights of his mind shift and play—his imagination

shines out warm upon it—it changes, and takes the freshness of fairy life.

When such an one turns away from men, and is left alone in silent communion with nature and his own thoughts, and there are no bonds on the movements of the feelings, and nothing on which he would shut his eyes, but God's own hand has made all before him as it is, he feels his spirit opening upon a new existence—becoming as broad as the sun and air—as various as the earth over which it spreads itself, and touched with that love which God has imaged in all he has formed. His senses take a quicker life—his whole frame becomes one refined and exquisite emotion, and the etherealized body is made as it were a spirit in bliss. His soul grows stronger and more active within him as he sees life intense and working throughout nature ; and that which is passing away links itself with the eternal, when he finds new life beginning even with decay, and hastening to put forth in some other form of beauty, and become a sharer in some new delight. His spirit is ever awake with happy sensations, and cheerful and innocent and easy thoughts. Soul and body are blending into one—the senses and thoughts

mix in one delight—he sees a universe of order and beauty and joy and life, of which he becomes a part, and he finds himself carried along in the eternal going on of nature. Sudden and short lived passions of men take no hold upon him, for he has sat in holy thought by the roar and hurry of the stream which has rushed on from the beginning of things; and he is quiet in the tumult of the multitude, for he has watched the tracery of leaves playing safely over the foam.

The innocent face of nature gives him an open and fair mind—pain and death seem passing away, for all about him is cheerful and in its spring. His virtues are not taught him as lessons, but are shed upon him and enter into him like the light and warmth of the sun. Amidst all the variety of the earth, he sees a fitness which frees him from the formalities of rule and lets him abroad to find a pleasure in all things, and order becomes a simple feeling of the soul.

Religion to such an one has thoughts and visions and sensations, tinged as it were with a holier and brighter light than falls on other men. The love and reverence of the Creator make their abode in his imagination, and he gathers

about them the earth and air and ideal worlds. His heart is made glad with the perfectness in the works of God, when he considers that even of the multitude of things that are growing up and decaying, and of those which have come and gone, on which the eye of man has never rested, each was as fair and complete as if made to live forever for our instruction and delight.

Freedom and order and beauty and grandeur are in accordance in his mind, and give largeness and height to his thoughts—he moves amongst the bright clouds, he wanders away into the measureless depths of the stars, and is touched by the fire with which God has lighted them—all that is made partakes of the eternal, and religion becomes a perpetual pleasure.

LETTER FROM TOWN. N^o. 2

"Not moved a whit,
Constant to lightness still!"

"You're for mirth
Or I mistake you much."
The Old Law.

E'en such a man, so faint, so spiritless,
So dull, so dead in look, so wo-begone."
Henry IV.

IN the first letter which I wrote you from town, I mentioned our old friend's taking me with him to his club. As we entered late, and a good part of the members could be seen but dimly through the smoke, I shall put off a general description till I have a view of them in a clear atmosphere. Besides, while it is fresh in my mind I wish to give you the latter part of a brisk dialogue, which was going on as we entered, between a snug built, well dressed, fresh looking man of about five and forty, and another of nearly the same age, I am told, but

apparently ten years older—of a slender, spare frame, clad in a mixed gray suit with black buttons—of a thin visage—with an impatient hurry at times in his speech, followed by a whining drawl. He nestled about in his seat, with a fidgeting motion, and there was a nervous twitching of the eyelids, and a restlessness in the eye, though he was all the while looking at one object, very much as folks do when repeating from memory. The first gentleman, who seemed to have most of the talk to himself, was going on thus, as we drew near them—

“There is no telling how large a pack of troubles a man may have upon his shoulders at the end of life, who keeps it always open like an alms-basket, and has no hole at bottom to let out a little of what he takes in. He need not ape a lame leg or a broken back. If he keeps his wallet stuffed with odd scraps of bad meat and mouldy bread, when he can get better, for the sake of groaning over his hard fare, he will go doubled and limping to his grave, in good earnest.”

“A pleasant fellow, you, Tom, with a nose-gay in your button-hole, and snuff between thumb and finger, who never found it too cold

without doors, nor too hot within. You go as gay as an ostrich, and with not a whit more thought neither."

"I've done my part, Abraham, and 'tis my wife's to look at things at home and to keep the children out of the fire, or cure 'em when they get in. Besides, I never saw any good come of too much care of the brats,—it only makes 'em helpless. And if all's at sixes and sevens at home, and my mate's voice and face grows sharp and angry, I come and take heart at the sound and sight of your clear voice and gay countenance, over a bottle of the best."

Abraham did not much like this taunt at his complainings, and his cheek began to kindle and grow redder and redder, like a coal fire, the louder and longer Tom laughed. Tom seemed to care little for this, so it put a stop to the drone-pipe which Abraham was said to play upon whenever he came to the club to have a merry night on't.

"No surer cure for our troubles, Abraham," says he, "than to get into a devil of a passion; and you've not a better friend in the world than I, who am always helping you into one. Why, you would have gone all night like an ill greased

wheel, spoke crawling after spoke to the melancholy creaking, hadn't I vexed you. Now, we shall see you in a fine whirl presently, striking fire out of every stone you hit against. Don't you remember how sad you were a half score years ago, because the gout wouldn't carry off your uncle; and when it did that business for you, and took you softly by the toe, only to tell you of it, how wo-begone you looked, just as if your mourning suit was to be handed over to your man John to appear respectably in at his master's funeral? Yet you got here to-night without halting; and if you don't make your way home as quick as the rest of us, it will not be the gout that will hinder you."

Abraham had three charges to answer to—his complaining disposition—his eagerness for his uncle's death, and an over fondness for good wine. Now, whether it was his anger that made him take up the last word, as is generally the way with a man in a passion, or that the two first charges were not to be denied, Abraham chose to clear himself of the last, and to have his revenge on Tom by railing against a weakness which he himself was kept from by at least as great failings. He knew the cost of his

liquor, and that too much wine helped to rid him of his uncle, and Abraham was said to be both a miser and a coward.

“Have you no shame in you, Tom, that you will be talking of drinking? Don’t you remember the snake track you made back the very last night you were here? And by the going of your clapper and the shine of your eye, you bid fair now to get home again the same way. When have you seen me make such a beast of myself as to hold up by my neighbour’s knocker instead of my own? I set my children a better example, teach them to strive against temptation and keep a watch upon any besetting sin. I tell them that life is a state of trial and affliction—that if they have riches and blessings to-day, they may be all gone to-morrow—that though they are now in health, sickness is nigh at hand, and that death may overtake them at noonday—that they must learn temperance in all things, and never forget they are in the midst of evils. But what good will it do to tell you this? You never will have forethought; and though there is little else but pains and misfortunes in life, you go on as reckless of all, as if harm could never come to you.”

“There you are at your saws again! I tell you what, father Abraham, he’s a fool who is always busy making troubles for himself, when there is no danger but what he will have enough gratis. I’ve weathered more storms than will ever beat on your head, though I haven’t sat like an old crow foreboding them while the sun shines. To take you in your own way, I have not forgotten what I read when a boy, ‘sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.’ My creed is, ‘to enjoy is to obey.’ And I can say more than can be said for most of you, I make my faith the rule of my conduct, and take care to act up to it. And if I sometimes love my friends so much as to forget myself and be a little too merry with them, it stirs my blood, and I’m all the better for it the next day. I lose no time by it, for it is all done up at night; and if I’m not quite right, my children will have a warning in me at home, and not be obliged to pull their neighbours’ characters to pieces to mend their own with. Besides, it is as well to have a failing or two to keep the world in good humour with one, for nothing puts people out more than a man’s being too good for them. And what would come of all my virtues, if they only made men enemies to me and, so, to themselves?

You talk about my children. Why man, don't they owe their lives to me, and what's more, don't I teach them how to enjoy life. Would you have me pray over them all day, till they were as long visaged as saints at conventicle? Stout hearted, full blooded lads,—and you would have them crawling along as meek and pale as a Philadelphia patient after a semi-weekly slop bleeding! Then again—there's my wife—but one purse between us and no questions asked. Rides or walks as she pleases—and not a word about shoe leather.” Here Abraham coloured. “I'm all attention;—see her at parties abroad, dine with her at home—when-ever there's company. She orders what suits her, and is undisputed mistress of the household. I'm always pleased to see her in spirits; and if affairs go wrong, and she's in ill humour, I take care not to put any restraint upon her by being in the way. I was here an hour earlier than usual to-night because the servant let fall the tea-tray and broke half a dozen tea-cups,—and as I've missed my tea, thank you Mr. B. to fill my glass.”

Twirling a light silver headed cane in his right hand and reaching out his glass with his

left, I began filling it. At this critical moment the long, dry, wrinkled, sallow visage of Abraham, looking like the inside of an old cast-off snuff bladder, caught my eye. Turned partly round, and leaning forward,—contrary to his custom, for he seldom looked at the person he was talking with,—his eyes were fixed steadfastly upon the rattle-headed Tom, with that mixed expression of pity and imploring with which one gazes upon a man that is going to be hanged;—if Tom was just then to have been swung off, it could not have been more mournful. I was so intent upon the face of Abraham, that I forgot what I was about, till Tom, feeling the wine running over his hand, and moving suddenly, brought me to myself. Before I could mutter an apology he saw the direction of my eye, and turning towards Abraham burst out into a loud laugh. It was not to be withstood. Tom had broken the enchantment; and in spite of good breeding and good feeling, there was an instant roar of laughter through the room. This was too much even for Abraham. He sprang upon his feet, uttering something between a mutter and a curse, (he never dared swear outright) and twitching down his hat, which had

grown nap-worn and round edged through use, and at the same time seizing his long, slender oak cane with something like a threatening motion, he darted out of the room between a run and a stamp.

As soon as we could speak, and had wiped our eyes—"I told him a little while ago," said Tom, "that I was the best friend he had in the world, and I shall always prove so. By putting him into such a rage, he's off without paying his share of the reckoning. There need be no making up between us, for he will no sooner remember this, than he will forgive me from the bottom of his heart. Poor fellow, I pity him. Nobody ever set out with fairer prospects, or has had things more comfortable about him; and yet he is the most forlorn being living. Didn't you hear him prose just now about his anxiety for his children?—while all his aim is to see that they shall be no happier than himself; for he takes another's enjoyment as a reproach upon his own self-made misery. And as to his care about their worldly estate, it is all because he feels their possessions will be in a sort his even after death. For my part, when I die, I'm content to give up all my claims to those I leave behind

me. And while I live, I mean to make them and myself as merry as we can know how to be."

With a rap upon his box, and shaking the snuff from between his fingers, Tom ended his moral lecture ; and with a well satisfied nod of the head, took himself off to wind up the night with a hand at whist.

The rest of the company soon went out, one after another, without any noise, like sparks upon burnt paper, leaving my old friend and me to finish the bottle. Without thinking of it, we at the same moment drew up to within a companionable distance of each other ; and while carefully pouring a little, first into my glass and then into his, alternately, that we might share alike, till the bottle was drained ; he began, in that same composed manner and low toned voice which was familiar to me some years ago, by observing, that though Tom's last remarks might seem harsh and in the extreme to me, yet he feared there was too much truth in them.

"I knew Abraham," said he, "when a child. He was then a spare lad, with a wrinkled brow, and weak, anxious voice. As he was feeble, his mother nursed him up with caudles and a tippet—bid him never wet his feet, and taught

him that it was a sin to dirty his clothes. Thinking him not fit to push his way in the world, and knowing that wealth stands one well in hand who has little force of character or intellect, Abraham was instructed, like other careful boys, to get himself a box to drop his money in, and never to spend his change foolishly on holydays. His love for every thing great and generous was destroyed by his attention's being forever taken up with little things. Seeing another so much concerned about him, made him overrate his own importance ; and his continued anxiety about his money and health soon centred all his thoughts and affections upon himself. And with all his pains-taking, finding others happier than himself, it was not long before he became an ill-natured, discontented man.

“ The other never had the headach in his life ; and fair weather or foul, it mattered little with him. Constitutionally happy, all that he could, he turned to enjoyment, and what he could not, he let alone. So much of his happiness came from his health, that he never cared for the more abstract pleasures of the mind ; and with that triumphant, joyous feeling which flows from full blood, he looked down upon feebler constitutions,

and at last felt a contempt for those who suffered under the afflictions of life. From the same cause, he apparently likes those who are fond of merriment, as well as he; and really supposes himself to be a kind-hearted, friendly fellow, when in truth he cares nothing about others only just so far as they help to make up a part of his pleasures. Tom is as selfish as Abraham, but not so annoying, because good natured. You may think I should allow some praise to this quality of character. There is no need of it. Men will always give it its full due; and as for its opposite, if it does not make its own punishment, the world will lay it on without sparing."

Here, our wine was gone, and the last candle was burning in the socket. We took our hats, and laying our reckoning on the table, we walked quietly home to my friend's house.

According to the little progress I have as yet made in my account of what I meet with in the city, you will be in danger of having me a correspondent for life.

Yours,

B.

WINTER SCENES.

The time has been that these wild solitudes—
Yet beautiful as wild—were trod by me
Oftener than now ; and when the ills of life
Had chafed my spirit—when the unsteady pulse
Beat with strange flutterings—I would wander forth,
And seek the woods. The sunshine on my path
Was to me as a friend. The swelling hills,
The quiet dells, retiring far between,
With gentle invitation to explore
Their windings, were a calm society
That talked with me and soothed me. Then the chant
Of birds, and chime of brooks, and soft caress
Of the fresh sylvan air made me forget
The thoughts that broke my peace, and I began
To gather simples by the fountain's brink,
And lose myself in day-dreams. While I stood
In Nature's loneliness, I was with one
With whom I early grew familiar, one
Who never had a frown for me, whose voice
Never rebuked me for the hours I stole
From cares I loved not, but of which the world
Deems highest, to converse with her. When shrieked
The bleak November winds, and smote the woods,
And the brown fields were herbless, and the shades,
That met above the merry rivulet,
Were spoiled—I sought, I loved them still,—they seemed
Like old companions in adversity.
Still there was beauty in my walks ; the brook,

Bordered with sparkling frost-work, was as gay
 As with its fringe of summer flowers. Afar
 The village with its spires, the path of streams,
 And dim receding valleys, hid before
 By interposing trees, lay visible
 Through the bare grove, and my familiar haunts
 Seemed new to me. Nor was I slow to come
 Among them, when the clouds from their still skirts
 Had shaken down on earth the feathery snow,
 And all was white. The pure keen air abroad,
 Albeit it breathed no scent of herb, nor heard
 Love-call of bird nor merry hum of bee,
 Was not the air of death. Bright mosses crept
 Over the spotted trunks, and the close buds
 That lay along the boughs, instinct with life,
 Patient, and waiting the soft breath of Spring,
 Feared not the piercing spirit of the North.
 The snow-bird twittered on the beechen bough;
 And 'neath the hemlock, whose thick branches bent
 Beneath its bright cold burden, and kept dry
 A circle on the earth of withered leaves,
 The partridge found a shelter. Through the snow
 The rabbit sprang away. The lighter track
 Of fox, and the rackoon's broad path were there,
 Crossing each other. From his hollow tree
 The squirrel was abroad, gathering the nuts
 Just fallen, that asked the winter cold and sway
 Of winter blast to shake them from their hold.

But Winter has yet brighter scenes,—he boasts
 Splendours beyond what gorgeous Summer knows,
 Or Autumn with his many fruits and woods
 All flushed with many hues. Come, when the rains

Have glazed the snow and clothed the trees with ice,
 When the slant sun of February pours
 Into the bowers a flood of light. Approach !
 The encrusted surface shall upbear thy steps,
 And the broad arching portals of the grove
 Welcome thy entering. Look, the massy trunks
 Are cased in the pure crystal, branch and twig
 Shine in the lucid covering, each light rod,
 Nodding and tinkling in the stirring breeze,
 Is studded with its trembling water-drops,
 Still streaming as they move with coloured light.
 But round the parent stem the long low boughs
 Bend in a glittering ring, and arbours hide
 The glassy floor. Oh ! you might deem the spot
 The spacious cavern of some virgin mine,
 Deep in the womb of earth, where the gems grow,
 And diamonds put forth radiant rods, and bud
 With amethyst and topaz, and the place
 Lit up, most royally, with the pure beam
 That dwells in them. Or haply the vast hall
 Of fairy palace, that outlasts the night,
 And fades not in the glory of the sun ;
 Where crystal columns send forth slender shafts
 And crossing arches, and fantastic aisles
 Wind from the sight in brightness, and are lost
 Among the crowded pillars. Raise thine eye,—
 Thou seest no cavern roof, no palace vault ;
 There the blue sky and the white drifting cloud
 Look in. Again the wildered fancy dreams
 Of spouting fountains, frozen as they rose,
 And fixed with all their branching jets in air,
 And all their sluices sealed. All, all is light,

Light without shade. But all shall pass away
 With the next sun. From numberless vast trunks,
 Loosened, the crashing ice shall make a sound
 Like the far roar of rivers, and the eve
 Shall close o'er the brown woods as it was wont.

And it is pleasant when the noisy streams
 Are just set free, and milder suns melt off
 The plashy snow, save only the firm drift
 In the deep glen or the close shade of pines,—
 'Tis pleasant to behold the wreaths of smoke
 Roll up among the maples of the hill,
 Where the shrill call of youthful voices wakes
 The shriller echo, as the clear pure lymph,
 That from the wounded trees, in twinkling drops,
 Falls in the dazzling brightness of the morn,
 Is gathered in with brimming pails ; and oft,
 Wielded by sturdy hands, the stroke of axe
 Makes the woods ring. Along the quiet air
 Come and float calmly off the light soft clouds,
 Such as you see in summer, and the winds
 Scarce stir the branches. Lodged in sunny cleft,
 Where the cold breezes come not, blooms alone
 The little wind-flower, whose just-opened eye
 Is blue as the spring heaven it gazes at—
 Startling the loiterer in the naked groves
 With unexpected beauty, for the time
 Of blossoms and green leaves is yet afar.
 And ere it comes, the encountering winds shall oft
 Muster their wrath again, and rapid clouds
 Shade heaven, and bounding on the frozen earth,
 Shall fall their volleyed stores, rounded like hail
 And white like snow, and the loud North again
 Shall buffet the vexed forests in his rage.





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